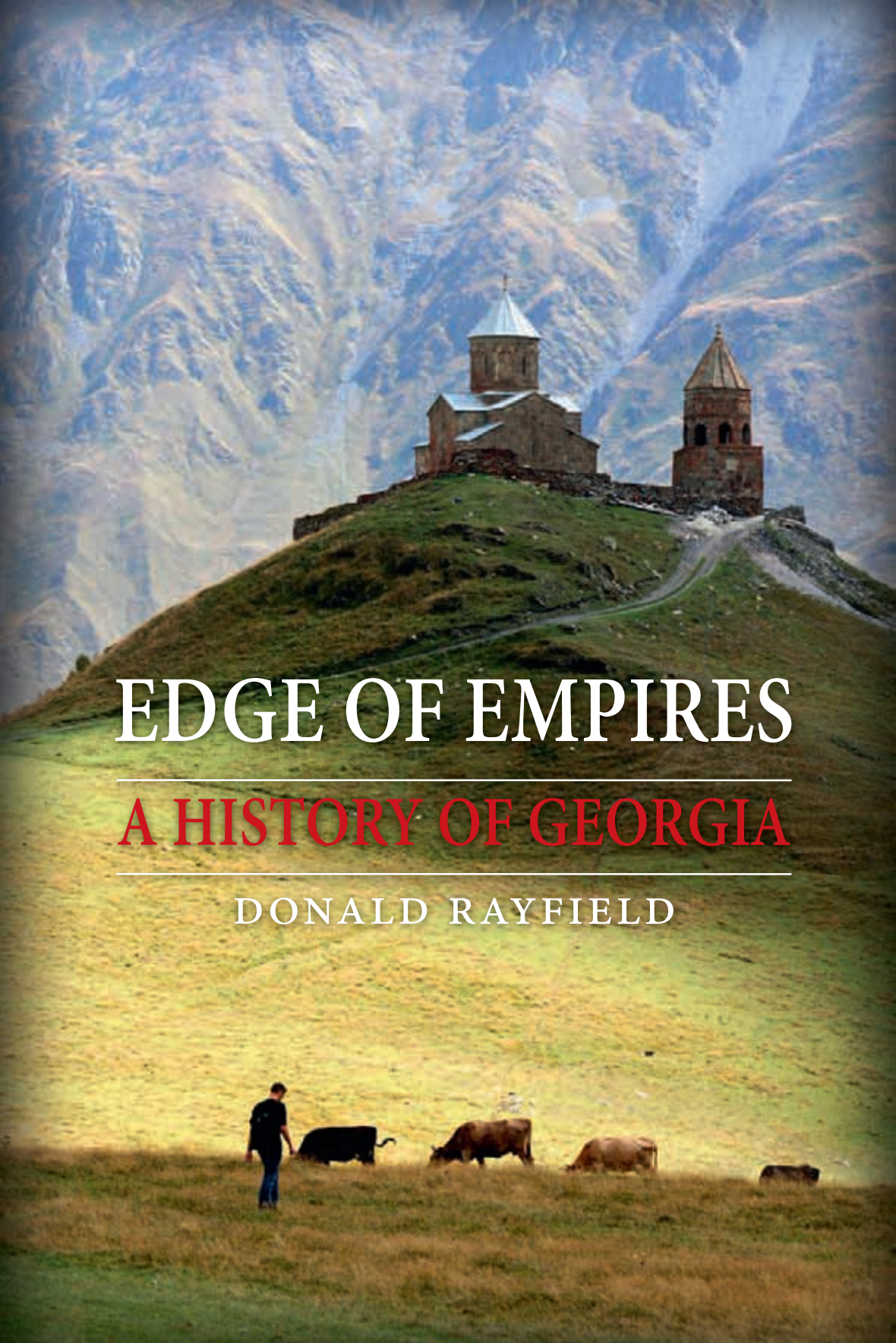

EDGE OF EMPIRES
A HISTORY OF GEORGIA
DONALD RAYFIELD

EDGE OF EMPIRES

EDGE OF EMPIRES

A HISTORY OF GEORGIA

DONALD RAYFIELD

REAKTION BOOKS

Published by Reaktion Books Ltd
33 Great Sutton Street
London EC1V 0DX
www.reaktionbooks.co.uk

First published 2012

Copyright © Donald Rayfield 2012

All rights reserved
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Rayfield, Donald, 1942–
Edge of empires : a history of Georgia.
1. Georgia (Republic) — History.
I. Title
947.5'8-dc23

ISBN: 978 1 78023 030 6

Contents

✠

Introduction *7*

1 The Emergence of the Kartvelians *11*

2 The Origins of the Kingdom of Kartli *22*

3 Conversion *38*

4 The Arab Conquest *55*

5 Unification *73*

6 Davit the Builder *85*

7 Demetre and Giorgi III *98*

8 Queen Tamar *107*

9 Mongol Invasion *118*

10 The Fractured State *132*

11 Timur Lang and the Destruction of Georgia *147*

12 Fratricide *164*

13 King Teimuraz I *187*

14 Teimuraz Dispossessed *207*

15 The Eighteenth Century *222*

16 The Russian Conquest of Kartli-Kakhetia *250*

17 King Solomon's End *265*

18 Vice-regency *284*

19 Reaction and Revolution *306*

20 Independence *323*

21 Soviet Annexation *339*

22 After Stalin *366*

23 Independence Restored *381*

✠

REFERENCES *402*

CHRONOLOGY *417*

MAPS AND DYNASTIC TREES *426*

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY *446*

PHOTO ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS *447*

INDEX *449*

Introduction

✠

The people of Crete unfortunately make more history
than they can consume locally.
Saki ('The Jesting of Arlington Stringham')

This is a history of Georgia firstly politically, as a country in its modern (*de jure*) boundaries; secondly, geographically, as the region of Transcaucasia between the Black Sea to the junction of the Iori and Mtkvari (or Kura) rivers, and between the high Caucasus to the little Caucasus around the lower reaches of the Çoruh and the upper reaches of the Mtkvari (or Kura) rivers; finally, historically, with boundaries which at periods reached far into today's Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the tenth century, Georgia was defined by Giorgi Merchule (ecclesiastical lawyer) as anywhere where Mass was said in Georgian.

To Georgians, a Georgian has always been both someone whose native language is Georgian, as well as any native of Georgia, regardless of ethnicity. The Georgian language belongs to the Kartvelian group of languages (a group never proven to be cognate with any other language group): to this group also belongs Mingrelian (Georgian *megruli*) and Laz. Sometimes known as the Zan languages, Mingrelian and Laz are so close as to be dialects of the same language, differentiated largely by the fact that the Laz have long been influenced by Islam and Turkish language and culture. Both Mingrelian and Laz are as close to Georgian as, say, Portuguese is to Spanish, so that there is a degree of mutual intelligibility. Two thousand years ago, the differences may have been merely dialectal. The fourth member of the Kartvelian group is Svan, now spoken by 50,000 people in the high mountains of the central Caucasus. Svan is an archaic member of the Kartvelian group, further from Georgian than, say, Romanian from French. Most Mingrelians and Svans are (and have long been) bilingual in Georgian.

For long periods in Georgian history, Abkhazia (whose indigenous language is a northwest Caucasian language unrelated to Georgian) has been part of the Georgian state. For most of Georgian history, those Ossetians (formerly Alanians, an Iranian people, remnants of the Scythians) who live in Transcaucasia have also been subjects of the Georgian state. A history of Georgia is therefore, at times, a history of Abkhazia and Ossetia. Similarly, substantial minorities of Armenians and of Azeris and other Turkic peoples, as well as distinct communities, such as the Georgian Jews, have played their part in the formation of Georgia.

Dates for events in Georgian history are often disputable or vague, at least until the end of the eighteenth century. Readers should note that until 1918 Georgia followed the Julian calendar, so that dates are twelve days behind the western (Gregorian) calendar from 1801 until 1900, and thirteen days behind until 1917. Georgian words are transcribed into English in two ways: in the main body of the text, I use a simple system which does not differentiate between the two language types of plosive consonant (p, t, k, ts, ch), aspirated or 'ejective'; in the index, however, ejective consonants are marked, following the usual convention, with ['], so that the original Georgian can be identified. (Otherwise the main text would be cluttered with apostrophes.) Names of persons and places are usually given in the Georgian form, with a few exceptions, such as Kura for the River Mtkvari (called Kur in Turkey, Kura in Azerbaijan and in antiquity Kyros). Otherwise, Georgian place names are transcribed from the original, except where an Anglicized form exists (e.g. Ossetia, Imeretia, Kakhetia). Christian names are given in their Georgian form (hence Davit, Giorgi, not David, George), and the case ending -i is omitted when it is not part of the root (for example, Tamar, Davit, but Giorgi). Turkish words are spelled as in modern Turkish, Russian as transcribed in the Library of Congress system.

Georgian history up to 1783 relies on a slender, long-established sequence of sources, mostly the primary Georgian chronicle (*Kartlis Tskhovreba*), supplemented by fragments from classical and Byzantine historians: archaeology and hitherto neglected Farsi and Turkish material has been the main source of new information. Between 1783 and 1917 Russian archives, especially the 13,000 pages published at the beginning of the twentieth century, known as *Akty sobrannye kavkazskoi arkhiograficheskoi kommisiei*, and travellers' and officials' memoirs give a very full picture of the country; the period since 1917 has more recently been illuminated by the opening in Tbilisi of the Georgian Communist Party's and Ministry of the Interior's archives.

I owe many thanks to Georgian friends, among them Shukia Apridonidze, Ninel Melkadze and Rusiko Amirejibi, for help in finding recent publications, to Tbilisi public library and to Omar Tushurashvili, director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs archives, and to Tbilisi's second-

Arthur Leist (1852–1927), *Mtskheta: Cathedral of the Living Pillar*.

Cathedral at Gelati monastery, near Kutaisi.

hand book dealers for tracing older work. Despite the tyranny of Stalinism, much Georgian historical writing between the 1920s and the 1970s is extremely thorough and objective. The recent recovery of independent Georgia from anarchy has enabled a small number of academics and former important officials to publish monographs, articles and materials that shed new light on a complex history.

Georgian materials in Europe are scattered over a vast number of libraries: I am grateful to the British Academy for a grant that enabled me to travel to the libraries and archives of Paris, Bologna, Rome, and other cities. In Britain, Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian in Oxford have been very helpful: I wish that I could say the same of SOAS in London, which, during 'refurbishment', put its entire Caucasian collection, including material available nowhere else in Europe, out of reach for over a year.

1

The Emergence of the Kartvelians

✠

The origins of the Georgian people(s), their ethnogenesis, like that of most nations, precedes documentary evidence. It is a subject where conjecture and wishful thinking have played a greater part than science or logic. One source for conjecture is linguistic: the Georgian language carries traces of its contacts and substrata over many centuries, possibly millennia; place names give clues to the languages spoken by previous inhabitants of an area. Archaeology also sheds light on early history, and can be eloquent about culture, about population levels and dates, but it cannot reliably identify the ethnic, let alone the linguistic affiliation of relicts of human activity. Finally, from the second millennium BC we have terse, sparse, but often precise, records in clay and stone of the Assyrian, Hittite and Urartu empires of Anatolia, which list hostile, conquered and vassal neighbours and give material from which the existence of the precursors of today's Kartvelians (Georgians, Mingrelians, Laz and Svans) can be deduced. From the middle of the first millennium BC, more extensive narrative accounts of the inhabitants of northeast Anatolia and western Georgia (Colchis) are provided by Greek historians and geographers, but the chronology is blurred, as are the lines between observation, legend and rumour.[1]

The oldest linguistic evidence lies in the modern Kartvelian languages: basic items of vocabulary, such as *mk'erdi*, chest; *k'udi*, tail; *tbili*, warm; *zghmart'li*, medlar; *rka*, horn; *krcxila*, hornbeam; *p'iri*, face; *ekvsi*, six; *shvidi*, seven; *trevs*, drags, suggest links to an Indo-European dialect with a consonant system reminiscent of the Italo-Celtic group from which Latin derives.[2] Furthermore, names of 'noble' animals – those hunted by the aristocracy such as deer and boar – seem to have Indo-European origins: this phenomenon resembles the Norman element in English, or the Magyar element in Hungarian, implying an invasion of a settled community by an alien aristocracy and its language. Georgian also has grammatical features, in noun declension and verb morphology expressing tense and mood,

which resemble Indo-European. These similarities are found in Svan, too, and since Svan broke off from Proto-Kartvelian millennia ago, the Indo-European element in Georgian must be ancient: it may coincide with the movement of Indo-Europeans from the Balkans into Anatolia three to four thousand years ago. (Subsequently, Georgian has borrowed extensively from neighbouring Indo-European languages, notably Old, Middle and Modern Persian,[3] but this process can be dated precisely.) Another non-Indo-European origin which are also found in classical Greek: the Kartvelian languages communed with the pre-Indo-European Mediterranean world.

We have evidence to associate the Georgians, after the fall of the Hittites, with the Urartu empire that dominated central and northeast Anatolia from the early Bronze Age (about 1200 BC) to the early Iron Age (about 700 BC). It is uncertain which kingdoms or tribal confederations in conflict or contact with Urartu included Kartvelians, but the peoples known for four hundred years to the Assyrians and Urartu as Mushki, Diauhi, Uiteruhi and Karduhi are relevant. The consonants *m-s-k(h)* figure even today in the Meskhi, a southern group of Georgians, now entirely Turkish-speaking; fifteen hundred years ago (and recently in Dagestan) Meskhi or Moskhi denoted Georgians as a whole. The Georgian southern province Samtskhe means 'land of the Meskhi', and Mtskheta, the capital city from around 300 BC to AD 500, 'city of the Meskhi'. Mushki are reported *c.* 1100 BC by the Assyrian king Tiglathpileser in southeast Anatolia: after their defeat they may have moved north. Greek writers later locate the Moskhi in the mountains south of Trebizond. Mushki / Meskhi also seem to refer specifically to eastern Georgia (Iberia or Kartli), which emerged as a state around 300 BC, when the Kura valley tribes coalesced into a kingdom. The pre-Christian religion around Mtskheta worshipped a moon-god Armaz, and a god of fertility, Zaden, showing continuity with Hittite, Hurrite and Urartu religions. Nevertheless, 'mushki', 'moskhi' and 'meskhi' may be 'floating terms', just as the word Welsh in Czech denotes Italian and in Bulgarian, Romanian.

Central Georgia in the Kura basin was first known as Iberia. Iberia has been derived from the Phoenician *'ebr*, meaning 'over there', or explained as a typical parallel in antiquity, where countries on the eastern known world bear the same names as countries in the west, e.g. Albania in the Balkans, and Caucasian Albania (on the north side of the lower Kura, in today's Azerbaijan). Iberian more probably derives from Speri, a people of northeast Anatolia known to Herodotus as 'Sasperi';[4] from Speri comes the Armenian for Georgians, (i)virk'. The modern term 'Georgian' is a contamination of Persian / Turkish Gurji, itself drawn from Armenian virk', with the cult of St George popular among Georgians, whether pagan or Christian.

The names of certain peoples and areas of interest to Urartu are perpetuated in the names of modern Georgian provinces: from the term *Diauhi* in the Hurrite language of Unartu it is reasonable to derive Georgian T'ao (Armenian *Tayk'* – the Urartu suffix *-hi* denotes 'people', the Armenian *k'*, plurality), a southern Georgian province now in Turkey; from the term *Zabahae* Javakheti (Armenian *Javakhk'*), the southeast borderland of Armenia and Georgia; from *Sheshet* today's Georgian district of Shavsheti.

Another possibly Urartu people, first mentioned by the Greeks, are the Karduhi. To 'Kardu-' has been attributed the Georgians' self-appellation, 'kartveli'. More probably, however, 'kart' is cognate with Indo-European 'gard' and denotes the people who live in fortified citadels,[5] as the Georgians did in settlements around Mtskheta.

Despite historical links with Urartu, little of Urartu's language is reflected in Kartvelian. The only notable term, *qira*, found in Georgian in idioms to do with up-ending or diving, may be related to Urartu, *qi(u)ra,* ground. The refrain of a Georgian harvest song, *Ivri-arali, tari-arali, ari-arali*, may be an Urartu invocation to the god of fruitfulness: 'Lord Arale, mighty Arale, give, o Arale'.[6] The Georgian (and Armenian) word for eagle, *arc'ivi,* is found in Urartu, but this is a widespread Indo-European and Hittite lexeme. (Likewise, Armenian, an Indo-European language which has equally perplexing relations to Urartu, has few words traceable to Urartu, whose yoke evidently lay easy on its neighbours' and vassals' languages.)

When Georgia emerged from legend into history it did so as two, possibly three, distinct entities. One is the core of the future unified state, Iberia (today's Kartli and Kakhetia), primarily the country east of the Likhi mountain range that divides rivers flowing into the Caspian (for example, the Kura) from rivers flowing into the Black Sea (the Rioni and the Çoruh). The second is Colchis, the Black Sea coast region that at its greatest stretched from east of Trebizond to north of today's Sukhumi, and whose border with Iberia in the Likhi mountains has fluctuated only slightly. The third is Svanetia, ancient Suania, which two or three thousand years ago was more extensive than today's landlocked highlands. Svanetia then reached the coast, and was at times subject to Colchis or Iberia (and their overlords), or divided, or autonomous. Greek geographers and the fact that the Svan language still has idioms figuring masts and sails testify that the Svans were once a maritime people, presumably peopling the Kodori estuary.

Colchis is mentioned as a kingdom long before Iberia: Urartu had to deal with an often powerful 'Qulha' on its northern boundaries. How Kartvelian a kingdom, or tribal federation it was, we do not know. By the sixth century BC, to judge by the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, and by archaeological data, Greek trading colonies dotted the Colchis coast, from the Caucasus down to Trabzon (the Hellenic Trapezunt or Trebizond). In

north Colchis a confederation of tribes kept its independence and even coherence, and there were towns inland from the Greek ports. One, about ten miles up the river Rioni in today's Poti, was allegedly called Aia. (Aia may be a back-formation from the legendary King Æëtes; in Homer Aia is Circe's island; later it denoted all Colchis, or just ancient Kutaisi.) Another Colchian city is known as Archaeopolis, now Nokalakevi, the site of extensive excavations today:[7] locally it was Tsikheguji, or the fortress of (King) Kuji; a third, near today's Kutaisi, was known as Rhodopolis (Georgian Vardis-tsikhe is a calque of the Greek). A major religious and political site, dating from the 8th century BC, was Vani, in central Colchis.

Hippocratic doctors warned Greeks against the dangers of the Colchian marshes, with their endemic goitre and malaria (hence the Colchians' unhealthy squatness and swarthiness), but morbid heat and humidity also made Colchis fertile and prosperous. Colchis was already notable for its linen and other exports, although at first its currency was not coinage, but bronze rings in multiples of 8.2 kilograms (similar to Assyrian standard weights). Little is known of how the Kartvelian and non-Kartvelian indigenous inhabitants of northern Colchis organized their affairs. King Æëtes may have been a historical personage, for as late as the second century AD Arrian, touring Colchis on behalf of the emperor Hadrian, reported seeing sites and ruins from Æëtes' time, while Pliny the Elder asserts that a descendant of Æëtes, King Saulaces, initiated gold-mining in Colchis (the Scythian name Saulakou appears on a second-century BC coin).[8]

No Colchian king has a Kartvelian name: Kuji, dated by Georgian chroniclers to the third century BC, has a name that means 'wolf' in Abkhaz. Æëtes, the legendary father of Medea in Greek myth, may possibly be Abkhaz (Khait', god of the seas). Later, in the second and first centuries BC we have Aristarchos and Saulaces – Greek and Iranian respectively. As for Colchis's indigenous name, Mingrelia (Georgian: Samegrelo), the Georgian root is *egr*. This we find in the classical Georgian name for Colchis, 'Egrisi', and corresponds to the Mingrelian names of peoples identified by Xenophon and Herodotus as 'marg'. The word Colchis may be derived from the ancient southwest province of Georgia Kola, with the Urartu suffix *-hi* indicating 'people'. Another Kartvelian group mentioned by Roman writers, when Colchis became known as Lazica, are the Laz. The term Laz derives from the Svan 'la-zan' meaning 'country of the Zan (Laz)'.

Greek and Roman geographers assert that between 70 and 300 languages were spoken in Dioscourias (later Sebastopolis, then Tskhumi now Sukhumi); Colchis seems by the first century BC to be split into a northern, Hellenized state and a southern heterogeneous tribal confederation (for some time under Persian hegemony); Colchis was subsequently known as Lazica, then Egrisi, then Abkhazeti. It must have been ethnically diverse, and its tribes, when they coagulated into a confederation, led by an Abkhaz,

Zan (Mingrelian or Laz), Svan or Scythian ruler, or someone from an ethnos now extinct. By 500 BC the prosperous Greek coastal towns, Phasis (founded by Themistagoras of Miletus, near today's Poti, but by a large harbour since silted up), Gyēnos (near today's Ochamchira) and Dioscourias (today's Sukhumi) had economic, if not political, power over the indigenous inland centres of Rhodopolis, Tsikheguji and Vani (known to the Greeks as Souris).

Greek sources are sparse; some merely cite lost geographical treatises. Assyria and Urartu record only battles and victories; the earliest hint of the complexity of Colchis comes from the Assyrian king Tukulti-Nimuri I (1245–1209 BC) who records '40 kings by the Upper [Black] Sea'. Archaeology tells us little: Dioscourias lies either underwater or under today's Sukhumi, while Gyēnos (apparently half-underground) and ancient Phasis are still unlocated. Most Colchian cities, built of wood, were destroyed in the Bosphoran king Pharnakes' invasion from the north in 49 BC and the Pergamonian king Mithridates' attack from the west in 47 BC. Relations between Greek colonists (who never founded a state in the eastern Black Sea) and Colchians were generally peaceful, except in Dioscourias, where ethnic tensions were acute, and a fourth century BC bronze stele refers to armed forces. The Greek settlements were mostly Miletian, and their temples were usually dedicated to Apollo. Colchian native cities like Vani were centres for the elite, and only gradually Hellenized: Vani's main temple was dedicated to Leucothea and had its own oracle.

Greek sources speak of a Colchian kingdom, ruled by *skeptouchoi* (sceptre-bearers), as Iranian provinces were ruled by *varanaka* (cudgel-bearers): a golden sceptre has been found at one Colchian site. Whether *skeptouchoi* betokened devolved or disintegrated administration, we do not know. The ethnic make-up of Colchis is also obscure: Phasis may, like Apsari in the south, contain the Abkhaz root *-psa-*, 'water'. Kartvelian affiliation is conspicuously absent from the few anthroponyms found in Colchian burials: Metos, Otoios, Dedatos, Mikakados, Mēlabēs, Chorsip, Orazo are Greek, Anatolian and Iranian.

The origins of eastern Georgia (Iberia, or Kartli and Kakhetia) are equally obscure, but the early Georgian chronicles, compiled between the eighth and eleventh centuries AD possibly from lost early records, as well as from oral tradition, provide a narrative in which myth evolves into plausible legend and finally into verifiable fact. Like many European nations, the Iberians have a 'Remus and Romulus', or 'Lech and Czech' myth: each city has an ancestral founder – Mtskhetos, Odzrqos – descending from a national founder, Kartlos, whose brother is Gaos, ancestor of the Armenians, and who descends from Noah's great-grandson Togarmah. Not until the fourth century BC, after Alexander the Great invaded Persia, transforming, albeit bypassing Transcaucasia, do the accounts of

The Life of Kartli and *The Conversion of Kartli* leave the realms of fantasy.

Iberia, even more scantily than Colchis, figures in records of Urartu royal conquests and in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, as well as stories relayed by Herodotus. We can deduce a little of the eastern Georgians' early history, and archaeology fills a few gaps. Records of the early Anatolian empires name northern Caucasian peoples earlier, and further west, than the precursors of Transcaucasian Kartvelians. Hittite records (before 1200 BC) mention Kashki in northeast Anatolia: to the Assyrians these were Kashka (with whom King Tiglathpileser warred *c.* 110 BC), a variant of 'Kashog', a later designation of Circassians. The Assyrians list the Abeshla, known to the Greeks as Apsils, today's Abkhaz, while the Caucasian Albanians (whose capital city in the early Christian period was Bardavi) may be the nation called Parda by the Assyrians. The Hittites record among their vassals and neighbours antecedents of the Armenians: Hayasa and Zukhma (Hayistan is modern Armenia, and Somekhi the Georgian for an Armenian).

Georgia's archaeological record begins in the Stone Age: the country has been continuously occupied by *Homo sapiens* for tens of thousands of years. Grain cultivation, cattle-raising, wine-making and metalworking began as early in Transcaucasia as anywhere on earth. Nothing, of course, indicates the language or ethnicity of these prehistoric humans. Burials give minimal anthropological data, with a fluctuation between tall, narrow-skulled northern skeletons and shorter, broader-skulled Anatolian types. As in Britain, DNA testing shows a remarkable stability over thousands of years in the population. Despite historically recorded invasions, changes of language, ethnicity and culture, the DNA of 80 per cent of today's population typically shows continuity with prehistoric inhabitants.

At the end of the Neolithic, around 1500 BC, burial customs and grave goods like statuettes of gods, particularly in Trialeti, the hills south of Tbilisi, are significantly similar to those in nearby Azerbaijan and Armenia and in the Mesopotamian culture of the Mittani empire and the central Anatolian empire of the Hittites. Some Trialetian burials, however, show signs of human sacrifice (slaves or servants of the deceased).

Around 800 BC Urartu records mention seven regions or peoples who may be Kartvelian: Kulkha (Colchis); Uiteruhi (possibly today's Odzrkhe); Katarza (today's Goderdzi Pass located between the Kura and lower Çoruh valleys, and perhaps the southern province of Klarjeti); Zabakhae (today's Javakheti); the Lusha (possibly the Laz); Eriahi (from whom the eastern Georgian province of Hereti may derive, but who are more likely to be precursors of the Caucasian Albanians); and finally the Iganehi (who may be known to the Greeks as Heniochoi, although the latter are later recorded both around Dioscourias and east of Trebizond, and may have been Svans and Mingrelians). King Argishti refers to the Iganehi ruler as overlord of all Transcaucasia ('Etiukhi' in Urartu). Of all these

peoples mentioned by Urartu and Assyria (in the twelfth century BC the Anatolian empires counted some sixty 'peoples' on their northern borders), we know most about the Diauhi. Urartu kings name three Diauhi rulers, Sieni, Asna and Utupurshini (persons and places presumably Kartvelian rarely have Kartvelian-sounding names – which implies that the elite were Hitticized or Hurritized – just as later Georgian rulers have Greek or Iranian names). In 1112 BC the Diauhi king Sieni was captured by the Assyrian king Tiglathpileser, but released after the Diauhi returned Assyrian prisoners and paid tribute. (The Diauhi were the only grouping significant enough for their leaders to be called kings by the Assyrians and Urartu.) Tiglathpileser led three campaigns against these 'northerners'. In 845 BC Shalmaneser III attacked the Diauhi king Asia and made him pay tribute; in 790 BC the Diauhi capital city, Shashilu, was captured by King Menua of Urartu: the records show him invading Shesheti, a province with a Kartvelian name (today's Shavsheti, now in Turkey), humiliating the Diauhi king Uturpurshini and forcing his people to dismantle their forts. (An area east of Diauhi is called Zabakhae, presumably today's Javakheti, southeast Georgia.) Five years later, Menua's successor Argishti renewed the campaign with 15,760 infantry and 66 chariots, taking 105 forts and 453 settlements in one province alone, and made Uturpurshini pay tribute of 20 kilograms of gold, 4,426 horses and 28,510 slaves (the Diauhi and their allies were evidently rich). Argishti then defeated a neighbouring Kartvelian tribe, the Uiteruhi, (from which the Greek 'Bizeroi' and medieval Georgian 'Odzrqe' [modern Odrzkhe] may be derived), and garrisoned their capital, Urienai. The Diauhi and their allies received no help in resisting Urartu from their fellow Kartvelians in Colchis. Urartu campaigns obliterated the Diauhi state by the eighth century BC: no more is known of them for 350 years, until Xenophon encountered people he called 'Taochoi' in 401 BC.

Having defeated the east Georgian people between the headwaters of the Çoruh and the Kura and around Lake Çıldır, Urartu came into conflict with the western Georgians of Kulkha (Colchis), which included one Diauhi province, Hushani. In 743 BC King Sarduri II attacked the Colchic king (I)mesha, capturing his capital Ildamush (apparently on the lower Çoruh) and commissioning an 'iron seal' there (the Colchians were now famous blacksmiths).

Like the Diauhi, the Colchians disappear from history in 735 BC, followed shortly by Urartu. Nomadic archers on horseback descended from the north Caucasus foothills: the Cimmerians via the Black Sea coast, the Scythians via the Caspian, others over the high Daryal Pass. Most were Iranian, but Circassians and Abkhaz may have joined them. Their attacks devastated all Transcaucasia and northeast Anatolia, and their armies reached Egypt's borders. The Assyrian king Sargon II (772–705 BC) records a rout of Urartu by Cimmerians on the upper Kura river in 720 BC.

Eventually, these Scythian and Cimmerian invaders were assimilated, as mercenaries, or, judging by place names, as settlers, from Trialeti to Cappadocia (both those toponyms are Iranian). Apart from thousands of bronze arrowheads, their passage is marked by grave mounds with horses and, sometimes, chariots. (They left a trace on the Georgian language: *khidi*, meaning 'bridge', is found in Mingrelian and therefore an early borrowing, is related to Ossetic and thus to these northern invaders.) In 676 BC, allied to King Rusa II of the chastened Urartu, the Cimmerians helped destroy King Midas's multi-national Phrygian empire in central and western Anatolia, which is known as the Mushki empire, although these Mushki are probably not the Mushki-Moskhi-Meskhi thought to be precursors of the eastern Kartvelians. (The only link between the western and eastern Mushki lies in the gods worshipped: the Hittite moon god Armaz and the Luvian god Santush are the pagan Iberian gods Armaz and Zaden whose idols were overthrown by Christian missionaries in the fourth century AD.)

The Cimmerian-Scythian invasion, by weakening Urartu, let various Kartvelian peoples migrate, or expand, westwards and northwards over the next three centuries. Some groups, certainly the Uiteruhi (Greek: Bizeroi) and Katarza (Greek: *Kotarzene*, Old Georgian: *Klarji*) moved over the Goderdzi Pass towards the Black Sea, driving a wedge between southern and northern Colchis, eventually ensuring that Georgian would be spoken from the mouth of the Çoruh to the juncture of the Kura and Alazan rivers, while Mingrelian would be confined to the northwest littoral of Georgia, and the Laz in southwest Colchis were cut off from the Mingrelians. By the third century BC, the name Meskhi had migrated 150 miles northeast from the province of Meskhi (later Samtskhe) to the city of Mtskheta: the focal point of Georgia shifted from the mountains between the upper Çoruh and Kura rivers to the junction of the Kura and the Aragvi river that comes down from the central Caucasian passes, a crossroads for traders and invaders from north to south and east to west.

The Diauhi reappear in Greek records as Taochoi, but when Herodotus discusses the Kartvelians *c.* 450 BC, they also appear as the Sasperi, the name Sper with a Georgian prefix of place *Sa-*, which evolved into the term Iberian. (Today's city of Ispir in northeast Turkey is derived from the Sasperi.) Herodotus thought Sasperi the only significant nation between Colchis and the new empire (or tribal alliance) of the Medes (Greek: *Madai*). The Medes were a northeast Iranian people who, allied to Babylon, destroyed Assyria in 600 BC and, allied to Scythians, then conquered Urartu; they were supplanted in 549 BC by Cyrus of Persia, who established the Achaemenid empire which dominated Anatolia as well as Persia until its defeat by Alexander the Great in 330 BC.

Under the Medes and the Achaemenid Persians, the Georgians of Colchis and of Iberia achieved parity, if not unity: Sasperi, or Iberians,

formed the eighteenth Satrapy of the Persian empire, and Colchians (Herodotus lists them as Moskhi, Tibarenes, Makarons, Mossynoeci and Mars) formed the nineteenth Satrapy. They benefited from the Achaemenids' efficient policing and organization of coinage, roads and caravanserais; they suffered heavy taxation and military conscription. Colchis apparently sent the Achaemenid king 100 boys and 100 girls every five years: these deportees served four-year terms as indented labour on Persian projects like the Susa fortifications. The recorded commanders of the 'Mares and Colchians' and of Iberia (the 'Saspires', as Herodotus called them) have Persian names, Farandates and Masistius, respectively.[9] In wars against Greece led by Darius the Great and Xerxes, Colchian soldiers are reported to have served under their own officers. The southern parts of Colchis and Kartli were apparently integrated with the Achaemenid empire until Alexander the Great annihilated it.

To judge by its Greek ports, northern Colchis remained outside the nineteenth Satrapy. How the Greek colonies of Dioscourias, Gyēnos and Phasis, or those further south around the 'Deep Harbour' ('Bathys Limen', today's Batumi), interacted with the indigenous population we can only guess: Greek colonists were mostly male and married local women. On the other hand there are signs of violent colonial domination: the destruction of coastal textile-weaving villages by fire in the sixth century BC. But this northern Hellenized Colchis prospered. Gemstones were worked in great variety. Numerous small silver coins, mostly hemidrachms, some minted with a Greek letter to indicate their origin, all with a bull's or a lion's head on one side and a male human head on the obverse, were produced from the sixth to third centuries BC, and show an advanced monetary system. (They were so common and of such poor silver that later generations used them as buckshot.) The quantity of imported goods (Egyptian scarabs, Phoenician glass beads) match Colchis's reputation as an exporter of flax, hemp, pitch and slaves (one Colchian slave was valued at 153 drachmas, equal then to a skilled worker's wages for six months). Pheasants derive their name from Phasis and, as Aristophanes records, Greeks considered pheasant meat a luxury import from Colchis. Heavy pyramidal loom weights testify to a textile industry. The rich of Colchis lived in stone houses with tiled roofs, the poor under straw thatch or in pyramidal log cabins on hillocks dug out of the marshes. To judge by the iron ploughs and large arable tracts, central Colchis farmed grain, although the climate, especially near the coast, restricted the harvest to millet. Archaeologists have found large iron balls (fired from catapults), which indicate a military with artillery at its disposal. Little writing, however, survives: a few names on tombs, manufacturers' Greek letters on coins and pottery, a monogram in Greek and in Aramaic on a black-glazed kylix, Aramaic letters on a fragment of gold leaf found at Vani. Burial customs,

from cremation in pits to interment in jars, indicate a very heterogeneous population, with Cimmerian, as well as Caucasian highlander influence. Further inland, near the borders of Iberia, there are other signs of north Caucasian influence, for example, a bird's bill sculpted in gold.

According to Plutarch, writing five hundred years later, the north of Iberia, like northern Colchis, was autonomous. The archaeology of all Georgia for this period suggests the emergence of an ostentatiously wealthy elite, with graves full of gold and jewellery, while the masses remained poor. Under the Achaemenids, key centres like Uplistsikhe, Urbnisi and Kaspi arose in central Georgia, skilfully built in stone. The plentiful weaponry in graves implies that the elite was military, even if living under an Achaemenid *pax imperialis*. One such centre, Uplistsikhe, is now dated to the eighth century BC, but, when Colchis was densely settled with trading and manufacturing communities, Iberia's cities were primarily fortified wartime refuges, or temples dedicated to Anatolian gods and serving clerics and pilgrims.

Very briefly, Achaemenid Persia, under a treaty with Callias of Athens in 459 BC, controlled the Black Sea, thus unifying all Kartvelians for the first time in history. The first period of Iranian domination of Georgia, first under the Medes, then under the Achaemenid Persians, lasted three hundred years, from the mid-seventh to mid-fourth century BC, but left little historical trace. But it began a process of lexical borrowing by Georgian from Iranian languages that would carry on until the end of the eighteenth century AD. From the little-known language of the Medes, from Old Persian and from Avestan religious terminology, Georgia took basic vocabulary, for instance: *st'umari*, guest; the root of *masp'indzeli*, host; *gandzi*, treasure; *sp'ilendzi*, copper; the root of *savane*, dwelling; *ts'minda*, pure, holy; *eshmak'i*, devil; *drosha*, banner.

In 436 BC Pericles of Athens reconquered the Black Sea, and probably the ports of Colchis. Greek colonies in southern Colchis, such as today's Pichvnari near Kobuleti, had not been disrupted by Persian occupation. By 410 BC the Achaemenid empire was riven by fratricidal rivalry: the brother of King Artaxerxes hired Greek mercenaries. Their coup failed: the Greek mercenaries' retreat in 401 BC is related in Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Xenophon's main interest was to get home, but his observations are our first eyewitness record of the state of Georgia in 400 BC. He reports the Colchians, Makrons (probably Mingrelians) and Karduchoi as freed from Persian servitude; the Karduchoi, the most easterly Kartvelians, are said to be at war with Armenians, but the 'Hesperites' (Sasperi or Iberians) to be subjects of West Armenia under Tiribaz, presumably Satrap of the eighteenth Persian Satrapy. Herodotus names the Taochoi as the most aggressive Kartvelian tribe, many living outside the control of the Satrap, defending themselves by throwing rocks from their fortresses, committing mass suicide by jump-

ing off cliffs when faced with defeat. The frontier between the Persian eighteenth Satrapy and 'free' Iberia ran through Taochoi territory.

Xenophon's men reached the lower Çoruh in Colchis. There they could converse: one Greek soldier, born in Colchis and exported as a slave, now interpreted with the local Mingrelian-speaking Mars and Makron or Tzanoi (Georgian: Zan), who had a coastal city, Gyminas. Herodotus thought the Tibarenes and the Chalybes (named for their skills with iron smelting) were identical to the Mingrelians. The only specifically non-Kartvelian people Herodotus records on his way into Colchis are Scythians, presumably remnants of nomadic invasions three centuries earlier. Leaving Trebizond westwards for Gerasun, Xenophon encountered the quarrelsome Mossynoikoi. Despite the Kartvelian prefix *Mo-* and the resemblance of their name to Saniga, who were located in northern Colchis and may have been Svans or Mingrelians, and despite their custom of living in fortified towers, the Mossynoikoi were not Kartvelian – their name derives from *mosyn*, an Indo-European (perhaps Thracian) word meaning 'tower': they are memorable for Xenophon's horror at their acrid wine, diet of salted dolphin, copulating in public and setting fire to towers in which their kings were imprisoned.

When the Greeks returned to eastern Anatolia 70 years after Xenophon, the changes for Georgia and the known world were far more radical.

2

The Origins of the Kingdom of Kartli

✠

The recorded history of Iberia (today's Kartli, which is the central part of the Kura valley, and the valleys of the rivers Aragvi, Alazan and Iori that run south from the high Caucasus) begins with Alexander the Great's invasion of Asia Minor and destruction of the Achaemenid Persian empire in 334–331 BC. Georgian chronicles and Roman sources describe Alexander invading Iberia, at first repelled by savage tribes north of the Kura, but finally expelling them and enthroning a southern Georgian or a Macedonian satrap Azon in a new capital, Mtskheta. In fact, Alexander invaded Persia from Mesopotamia, and approached the Caucasus only when his army pursued Iranian forces along the western Caspian shore. Greek influence on the fourth century BC Iberia is demonstrated by red roof tiles, of Attic size (33 cm long), and marked with a Greek initial;[1] 'k'ramití', meaning 'roof tile', comes from the Greek *keramis*. Certainly, the Greek annihilation of the Achaemenid empire let the Iberians determine their own fate; the account in the chronicle *The Conversion of Georgia* of a king of 'Arian-Kartli' (southern Aryan-Persian-ruled Iberia) moving northeast down the Kura, with a score of noble families and a thousand commoners, forcing himself on the 'Inner Iberians' of Mtskheta, fits archaeological data (new fortifications along the Kura, plentiful weaponry among grave goods). For this period, archaeology is more reliable than chroniclers' records, and it confirms the link between Meskhi (southern Kartvelians) and the new capital, Mtskheta. Azon is said to have brought his gods Gatsi and Ga and erected their golden and silver idols at Mtskheta. Azon may be a fiction of chroniclers writing some nine hundred years later (Armenian chronicles have Alexander appointing a real Mithridates – 337–302 BC, father of Mithridates I, king of Pontus – as satrap of Iberia, and a legendary Aran as king of the Caucasian Albanians). Whoever was their leader, Georgians from Klarjeti and Tao certainly took over central Iberia. Chroniclers portray Azon as a tyrant hated for heavy taxation and

disdain of the indigenous population. He reputedly relied on 100,000 'Roman' (i.e. Greek) soldiers, who subsequently deserted him for his nemesis, Kartli's first king, Parnavaz.[2]

Parnavaz is treated by later chroniclers as a superhero. His existence is corroborated only by a fifth-century Armenian chronicler who calls Georgian kings descendants of Parnavaz. But he is more historical than, say, King Arthur of Britain, for his legacy, as the creator of the first Georgian state, is evident in the Georgia that emerged following his rule. Counting the years back from historically better attested kings, we can date Parnavaz's biblically long reign to 299–234 BC, in which case he was born in 326 BC. Like many succeeding Iberian kings, his name contains the Iranian root *farna-*, meaning 'divine radiance': he is ascribed a Persian mother, as well as an uncle Samara, allegedly a chieftain of Mtskheta's Kartvelians. According to the chronicles, he was orphaned by Azon, and then found, while hunting, a treasure revealed in a dream, with which he financed a rebel army. More plausible is his pact with a ruler of Egrisi (central Colchis), Kuji, a pact cemented by Kuji's marriage to Parnavaz's sister. After killing Azon in battle, Parnavaz ruled under the suzerainty of Alexander the Great's successors, the Seleucids ruling from Antioch in Syria. He organized a Georgian state, in which Egrisi-Colchis was recognized as an autonomous duchy, and Iberia was divided into seven duchies. These divisions resemble the make-up of Georgia in Byzantine times: they are a chroniclers' retrospective projection. The significant feature of Parnavaz's reform was that 'Inner Kartli', the core of the country from the juncture of the Aragvi and the Kura rivers eastwards, was ruled by a *spaspeti*, Generalissimo or Governor-General, usually of royal blood, and subordinate only to the king: this appointment explains the illusion in later centuries of a diarchy in Iberia, one monarch ruling the right bank of the river Kura and the other the left.

Parnavaz is also said to have erected a statue of the moon god Armaz on a hill overlooking Mtskheta (hence Armaztsikhe, Armaz castle), giving the Georgians, without suppressing earlier beliefs, a unified religion based on worship of the moon. (Strabo mentions a temple to the moon god on the Colchis–Iberian border.[3]) As part of his consolidating politics, Parnavaz is stated to have made Georgian the state language. He is credited with introducing literacy: if he did, it was a form of Aramaic widespread in later inscriptions, from commemorative sarcophagi to graffiti on altars, on gamblers' knucklebones and pilgrims' fortune-telling plates.[4]

Half-Iranian himself, Parnavaz reflected the multi-ethnic nature of his kingdom, marrying a Dzurdzuk (a Chechen or Ingush from the central Caucasian highlands), and giving his daughter in marriage to an Ossetian. These alliances enabled future Iberian kings to influence the nomads and highlanders north of the Caucasus, either barring them from

the Daryal gorge, or letting them through to devastate Georgia's neighbours. (Strabo confirms that the Iberian highlanders could 'assemble many tens of thousands, both from their own people and from Scythians and Sarmatians, whenever anything alarming occurs'.[5]) Parnavaz seems not just to have consolidated, but expanded his empire south to the banks of the upper Araxes in Armenian territory, and southwest towards the mouth of the Çoruh.

Traditionally, Parnavaz was succeeded by his son Saurmag, whose Ossetic name (meaning 'black-handed') implies that he was actually Parnavaz's Ossetian son-in-law. Saurmag, too, is assigned a reign of pentateuchal length, from 234 to 159 BC. Saurmag apparently added two new gods, Ainina and Danina, to the Iberian pantheon, but both Georgian states still worshipped the 'sun, moon and five planets', as the seventh-century Iberian *Martyrdom of Evstati* recalls: a bronze tablet of *c.* 300 BC from Vani in Colchis warns oath-breakers in Greek that they, too, answer to 'mother-earth, the sun and moon'.

Saurmag, like Parnavaz, integrated Ossetians and Chechens; he brought over the Caucasus into the upper Aragvi valley 'half the Dzurdzuk' nation: local place names confirm a Chechen immigration, which provided Iberia with fearsome warriors and, at times, ungovernable looters. The arrival of Iberia's Jews in Mtskheta's Zarnavi quarter (where Hebrew inscriptions and Jewish graves date from the first century AD) has been dated to 169 BC[6] following Saurmag's policy of inviting useful immigrants: the urban population over the next century extended to Aramaic-speaking ('Syrian'), Armenian and Iranian communities. (Jews, Armenians, and probably Syrians were also prominent in the urban communities of Caucasian Albania.)

Saurmag was subservient to the Seleucid empire that still controlled Anatolia and Syria. But by the end of Saurmag's reign, Seleucid unity was broken by Pontus, a strong kingdom covering the southeast Black Sea coast and hinterland. Under King Pharnakes I, Pontus captured most of the southern Black Sea coast; soon the Armenians lost Trebizond, and Pontus expanded east, annexing southern Colchis and threatening Iberia: Iberians and the Seleucids needed each other's help. East and southeast of Iberia, a new threat emerged: the militant Iranians of the Parthian kingdom. In 247 BC Arshak made himself king of Parthia; initially, Parthia and Iberia joined forces against a resurgent Armenia that was exploiting Seleucid internecine feuds. By Saurmag's death, Armenia had taken from the Kartvelians southern Tao (north of today's Erzurum).

Alexander the Great's world order collapsed everywhere but in Egypt. In the early second century BC, the Romans' new empire impinged on Asia Minor: in Greece, the Romans clashed with the Seleucid Antioch III, forcing him in 188 BC to surrender all Anatolia north of the Taurus

mountains. Over a century would pass before Iberia saw its first Roman legionaries, but Armenia immediately profited from Rome's defeat of the Seleucids by taking both Mede and Iberian territory. Parnavaz's unified Georgia crumbled: Argveti district, where Colchis borders central Iberia, reverted to Colchis, and for decades central, if not all, Colchis became an autonomous kingdom. From the third century BC, we have a Colchic coin inscribed 'King Akes'.[7] By 150 BC Colchis was once again minting silver coins (under Parnavaz both Colchis and Iberia minted gold coins modelled on the staters of Alexander the Great). Parts of Colchis assimilated north Iranian invaders: Pliny the Elder mentions a King Saulaces (Ossetic *Saulæg*, meaning black face), a second-century BC king exporting gold and silver.[8]

By losing power over Colchis, Saurmag undid Parnavaz's achievements: therefore, perhaps, the Iberian nobility plotted against him and he fled to Dzurdzuk country – to raise a force to quell the rebellion and create a new elite. Saurmag had no male heir: he adopted an Iranian, Mirian, to whom he married his daughter.

Mirian I (assumed to have reigned from 159 to 109 BC) suppressed a Dzurdzuk invasion of Kakhetia, crossed the Caucasus and ravaged Chechnya: he fortified the Daryal Pass against further invasions. But Mirian could not halt the expansion of Pontus and Armenia. In 111 BC, Mithridates VI Eupator became king of Pontus and began the absorption of all but the north of Colchis into his empire. Worse, Mithridates VI sought an alliance with Armenia, putting Iberia in double jeopardy.

Mirian I was succeeded by his son Parnajom, who reigned over Iberia from 109 to 90 BC. His sole recorded initiative was to erect a statue of another Anatolian god, Zaden, over a new fortress across the river from Armazi Castle. Because of this, or the continued attrition of Georgian territory, and allegedly with Armenian support, Parnajom was murdered by his own aristocracy. His son (the future Mirian II) sought asylum in the Parthian court, and the throne was offered to Arshak (Artaxias in classical sources). Arshak was reputed to be son of King Artavasdes of Armenia, but, married to a descendant of Parnavaz, had a claim to the Iberian throne. The sparse information about Arshak's reign (90–78 BC) suggests that internecine and international strife had abated: given his Armenian origin, it is strange that Arshak is credited with fortifying Tsunda city on the Iberian–Armenian border in Javakheti.

From 78 to 63 BC the king of Iberia was Artag, apparently a son of Arshak. Of his early reign we know little, but he was the first Iberian king encountered by the Romans (he was Artoces to Appian, Cassius Dio, Eutropius and other chroniclers of Rome's Mithridatic Wars), and we have fairly precise information about his actions at the end of his reign. Mithridates VI caused the Romans to enter Iberia: around 110 BC

Mithridates threatened Roman hegemony by conquering the Graeco–Sarmatian Bosphoran kingdom around the Sea of Azov, at the northeast extreme of the known world; Mithridates then conquered northwestern ('Lesser') Armenia and the Colchis, before turning on Anatolia. King Tigranes II of Greater Armenia, however, sided with Mithridates VI, invaded northwest Parthia and dominated Caucasian Albania, taking advantage of Rome's predicament, since Mithridates had landed in mainland Greece. Mithridates was eventually expelled from Greece and much of Anatolia, both by local rebellions and Roman legions, but in 73 BC he began his third and last war with Rome: the Romans first sent Lucullus in 69 BC to attack Tigranes II, Mithridates' ally. Iberians and Caucasian Albanians fought for the Armenians, the Iberian javelin-throwers proving fearsome. Whether Artag fought at the Armenians' behest or to prevent Roman incursion into Iberia is unknown, but Georgian participation in the war made Roman invasion inevitable.

Winter and mutinous soldiery made Lucullus withdraw, but in 66 BC Gnaeus Pompey resumed the war and won resoundingly. Mithridates was forced (after clashing with Iberian forces as he fled via the Çoruh valley) to cross Colchis to the north. There he found his son, Machares, whom he had put on the throne of Bosphorus, hostile, and had to turn back to Dioscourias. Mithridates then faced a rebellion by another treacherous son, Pharnakes: in 63 BC he killed himself. Tigranes II of Armenia, desperate to regain his throne, usurped by his son (also Tigranes), now concluded a humiliating peace with Pompey, surrendering his western provinces and becoming a tribute-paying Roman ally. Pursuing Mithridates through Colchis was still on Pompey's agenda, but securing Iberia and Caucasian Albania as allies or subjects of Rome had priority, since both these kingdoms could block the Caucasian passes to the steppe nomads whom the Romans now perceived as their most serious threat. Pompey also wanted to secure the valuable 'silk road' from both India and China, across the Caspian (whose waters Pompey tasted), through Caucasian Albania, Iberia and Colchis. In December 66 BC, an army of 70,000 Iberians under King Artag and Caucasian Albanians under King Oroiz attacked the Romans on the Kura, but were forced to conclude a truce. Pompey overwintered in the upper Kura, descending in spring to attack Iberia, killing 9,000 and taking 10,000 prisoners, before going down river to deal with the Albanians. Like Tigranes II, Artag sent peace envoys; unlike Tigranes, he prepared an ambush at Mtskheta, but Pompey overtook him and took the garrison. Artag crossed the Kura and burned the bridges. Pompey took over all inner Iberia south of the Kura, waiting for summer to dry up the rivers and let his army ford the Kura and Aragvi, destroy the forest cover, and rout Artag. Artag had to offer his sons as hostages, give

Pompey 'a bed, a table and a throne made of gold' and promise fealty to the Roman Republic, before he could surrender without fear of being taken to Rome in chains. (The captives paraded in Pompey's triumph in Rome included three Iberian nobles, a Colchian skeptouchos, two Caucasian Albanians, Tigranes junior, five sons of Mithridates VI and two daughters of the Jewish king Aristoboulos.)

Pompey crossed from Iberia to Colchis, widening the mule track over the Likhi Pass for wheeled vehicles, bluffed and fought his way to the coast and appointed Aristarchos, a Greek governor, over a subdued, rather than conquered central Colchis (Pompey avoided fighting the hostile Svans, Abkhaz and Circassians of northern Colchis: it was enough that Mithridates was now blockaded and isolated.) Pompey then backtracked through Iberia, and subdued King Oroiz of the Caucasian Albanians as he had Artag. By 64 BC Transcaucasia was effectively bound to Rome as three allied kingdoms – Iberia, Armenia and Caucasian Albania – and the protectorate of Colchis, since Aristarchos reported to Deiotar, ruler of Paphlagonia (the one drachma bearing Aristarchos' name – found in Sukhumi-Dioscourias – calls him merely 'Aristarchos of Colchis', with no royal title).

To imagine society and life in Artag's Iberia we have Strabo's descriptions, based on reports by Theophanes the Miletian, who accompanied Pompey's army to Iberia in 66 BC. Strabo notes the contrast between Iberia's highlanders and lowlanders, the former resembling Scythians, the latter Persians – reflecting the difference between nomadic north Ossetians and Chechens, settled in Kartli under previous kings, and native Georgians in the valleys. Strabo discusses the king's deputy, often his brother or the namesake of a present or former king (which has misled historians to presuppose a diarchy in Iberia), the theocratic power of Iberian priests, acting also as lawmakers and negotiators, and a third estate, consisting of freemen who were both farmers and warriors (the term 'eri' means both 'people' and 'army') and 'the king's slaves', or crown serfs. Other members of the lower orders, immigrant communities in particular, were organized in communes. Iberian towns are described as well built, with tiled roofs. Of foreign traders and enslaved prisoners of war, Strabo says nothing.[9] Archaeologists note frequent second-century BC burials without grave goods, often in enormous wine jars, suggesting a military society changing into one of burghers and urban craftsmen.

Not all Artag's sons were Roman hostages: in 63 BC he was succeeded by his son Parnavaz II (also known in Georgian chronicles as Bartom or Bratman). For the next twenty years under Parnavaz II, Iberia-Kartli seems to have been peaceful.

On Colchis we have less information, but it must have been developed: Strabo notes that the pass from Iberia to Shorapani led to a road

with 120 bridges across the Phasis. Colchis, however, sank into chaos, precipitated by Mithridates' heirs, and by the Roman Civil War that broke out in 49 BC between Pompey and Caesar, Pompey being backed by Deiotar of Paphlagonia. Coastal Colchis was ravaged in 66 BC by Mithridates VI's fleeing forces; around 48 BC Mithridates' son Pharnakes, king of Bosphorus, invaded Colchis from the north, before attacking Lesser Armenia and Roman-controlled Pontus. Pompey was defeated by Caesar at Pharsala in 48 BC and then perished in Egypt: it fell to Caesar to eject Pharnakes in 47 BC (when he boasted, 'Veni, vidi, vici'). Colchis endured ravages by yet another defeated army, Pharnakes looting the temple of Leucothea and devastating the Vani district. Pharnakes was killed by his viceroy Asandros in the Bosphorus. His kingdom was given by Caesar to an ally, Mithridates of Pergamon, who died fighting Asandros, in a war that devastated parts of Iberia on Colchis's southern borders. Asandros of the Bosphorus retained areas of Colchis until his death in 18 BC. After 47 BC, central and southern Colchis became a fiefdom of King Polemon I of Pontus for forty years, and then passed to his widow Pythodoris, as her dowry for a second husband, Archelaios, king of Cappadocia. Briefly, Colchis joined a family empire, for King Polemon's son Zenon held the Armenian throne from AD 18 to 34. In AD 17 Tiberius attempted to incorporate Colchis, but by AD 38 Pontus and Colchis belonged to Polemon II, the grandson of Polemon I, and, for a short time also king of the Bosphorus (on the Sea of Azov); Polemon II's brother, Kotis, became king of Lesser (Roman, Western) Armenia. (In AD 69 Polemon II had to crush a rebellion in Pontus led by an ex-slave, Aniketes, the chief of his navy.)

In AD 63, after Nero began his war on Parthia, both Pontus and Colchis were governed as Roman provinces from Trebizond, where Corbulo's legions were stationed; the Romans in Colchis, however, were confined to coastal garrisons. Trebizond apparently had mostly Kartvelian inhabitants, 'Henniochs and Makrons', while north of the mouth of the river Çoruh, where a Roman garrison held Gonio, was territory controlled by Laz and Iberians. Phasis, Dioscourias and other Greek settlements in Colchis had not recovered from the wars of 60–40 BC; Trebizond, with its 'free city' status and own coinage, became the commercial and political centre.

Northern Colchis suffered from wars between northeast Caucasian tribes, its ports and Greek settlements from barbarian piracy. The Roman garrisons of 3,000 hoplites and fleet of 40 vessels could only, according to Josephus, hold the ports. The northernmost port, Pityus (Pitsunda), was razed in AD 50, probably by Svans; a Svan king with a council of 300 and an enormous army may have controlled Dioscourias for a century before AD 50, when Dioscourias, too, succumbed to looters.

Civil war left Rome unable to dominate Iberia, Armenia or Caucasian Albania. Parthia grew stronger: it crushed Marcus Licinius Crassus's Roman army in 53 BC, and induced Armenia to turn eastwards for allies. (That year Euripides' *The Bacchae* was performed at the Armenian court, the last gesture of a Hellenic, western-oriented Armenia: the performance was enhanced, or spoiled, by the head of Crassus being flung on stage, forcing the actors to improvise.) By 40 BC Parthia had taken much of Anatolia from Rome. In 36 BC Mark Antony retaliated, but failed because Armenia, Iberia and Caucasian Albania were hostile; he returned with an army under Publius Canidius Crassus to attack Parnavaz II; the Iberian king was quickly turned from foe to friend and forced to join Crassus in the campaign against his neighbour, King Zober of the Caucasian Albanians, who likewise submitted. This episode, too humiliating to be mentioned in Georgian chronicles, is plausibly reported by Cassius Dio. Parnavaz II did not long survive his humiliation: Mirian, King Parnajom's son, who had fled to Iran over fifty years previously, returned to Kartli with a Parthian army. Parnavaz II had an ally from Colchis, his son-in-law Kartam (an Ossetic name), a descendant of Kuji (Parnavaz I's confederate ruler of Colchis), but Mirian II's army killed both. (Parnavaz II's line survived only through his daughter, who escaped to Armenia and gave birth to a son, Aderki.)

Mirian II, an old man when he restored the Parnavazid dynasty to the Kartlian throne, reigned for just ten years. He collaborated with Rome and kept the passes over the Caucasus closed to northern invaders. Rome never invaded Kartli again: officially, Augustus declared that Iberia and Caucasian Albania had 'gained Rome's friendship'. To judge by the coinage, for all of the first century AD Iberia dominated much of Colchis, too. In the vacuum left by the Roman empire, Parthia and its ally Armenia began to threaten Kartli's integrity, but actual conflict began only fifty years after Mirian II's death in 20 BC.

Mirian was succeeded by Arshak II (or Arsuk), who had an Armenian mother. In AD 1, however, he was challenged by Aderki, the son of the Colchian Kartam and of the daughter of Parnavaz II of the Artaxiad dynasty. Aderki's army killed Arshak II: the second overthrow of Parnavaz I's dynasty. King Aderki (King Rok to the Georgian chronicles) was known abroad, and probably ruled, as Parsman (Pharasmanes) I.

Under the rule Parsman I, Iberia at first lived peacefully with its neighbours, particularly the warriors of the north Caucasus: that alone deterred its southern and eastern neighbours from antagonizing Parsman, who had Roman protection. Tacitus says that four legions guarded Iberia and Caucasian Albania's frontiers in AD 23. (Tacitus contradicts the Georgian chronicles, for he ascribes Parsman I's actions to the next King of Iberia, Mithridates – Mihrdat – I.) Rome's complicity helped Parsman to swallow up Armenia, which dithered between Roman and Parthian

protection. In AD 18 Emperor Tiberius put Zenon, a son of King Polemon of Pontus, on the Armenian throne. Zenon ruled as King Artashes until AD 34, but the Parthian king Artaban III then overthrew the Pontic regime and made his own son, Arshak, king of Armenia. The Parthian nobles, however, rejected Artaban and asked Tiberius to crown another king, Tiridat.

Parsman I claimed that Armenia was promised by the Romans to the Iberian royal family: in AD 35, reinforced by Caucasian Albanians and north Iranians, he invaded Armenia, expelled Parthian forces, bribed Armenian nobles, captured their capital of Artaxata on the river Araxes, and put his brother Mithridates on the Armenian throne. King Artaban III of Parthia rallied an army under his son Orod, and recruited Albanian and Sarmatian mercenaries to recapture Armenia. Parsman, however, had hordes of Sarmatians in his own army, and closed the high passes to Artaban III's recruits. A battle between Parthian cavalry and Iberian and Sarmatian foot soldiers ended with Parsman I personally smashing Orod's helmet with one blow: Orod galloped off, but rumours of his death demoralized the Parthians.

Artaban III only succeeded, with Scythian troops, in driving Tiberius' nominee Tiridat out of Parthia, but he could not unseat Mithridates (brother of Parsman) in Armenia, because he faced war with Vitellius' legions if he dared to attack the Iberians.

The Armenian crown lay uneasy on Mithridates' head: a few years later he was summoned by the Emperor Caligula to Rome and put in chains, presumably for attempting an alliance with the Parthians that would win over the pro-Parthian Armenian nobility. In AD 47 the Emperor Claudius rehabilitated Mithridates, since the Parthians had exploited his removal to enter Armenia. The Romans tried to help by destroying Armenian mountain forts and letting Iberians occupy the northern plains; Claudius forbade King Kotis of Lesser Armenia from intervening, and ensured that the Parthian commander Demonakt had no Armenian support. But on his restoration, Mithridates incurred the distrust of his elder brother Parsman. Mithridates was courting the Parthians again and refusing to seek Roman legions to support Parsman's attack on Caucasian Albania (an attack which succeeded without Armenian help). In AD 51 Parsman sent his son Radamist to subvert Armenia, ostensibly on Rome's behalf.

Parsman I now dominated three kingdoms, Iberia, Greater Armenia and Caucasian Albania: the Romans feared their client-ally was too big for his boots. They saw Radamist appear at the Armenian court as a refugee, persuading his uncle Mithridates that he and his father Parsman had quarrelled, and yet bribing Armenian nobles to support Iberia. Radamist went back to Iberia to fetch an army, and besieged the Armenian fort of Gornea.

Radamist persuaded the Roman garrison to leave the fort. The indignant garrison commander Casperius travelled to Iberia to demand that Parsman call off the siege. Instead, Parsman instructed Radamist to capture Gornea, which Radamist did by bribing a Roman commander to induce Mithridates to surrender. On Parsman's and Radamist's orders, Mithridates and his entire family were murdered.

Neither Rome nor Parthia could tolerate Iberia's conquest of Armenia. A Roman army from Syria and Cappadocia failed to take the Armenian kings' summer residence, but the Parthian king Vologes (Valarsh, AD 51–80) easily expelled the Iberians from Armenia. An epidemic of plague and a famine, however, drove the Parthians out of Armenia. Radamist returned briefly, but was expelled by the Armenian nobility. Finally, the Parthian king Tiridat's brother took the throne, and ended twenty years of Iberian rule in Armenia.

To cement a new Roman–Iberian alliance, to forestall a coup, or out of sheer ruthlessness, Parsman I had Radamist murdered. Tacitus reports that Radamist was originally sent to Armenia to hide him from his hated (and vindictive) stepmother, who wanted her own son, Mihrdat (Mithridates), to inherit the Iberian throne. Radamist was also said to despise his father's 'timidity'. In AD 58, when Parsman died, Iberia did, however, get a piece of Armenia: Emperor Nero sent Corbulo's legions to expel Tiridat: Tiridat clung to his throne, but Armenia's northern and western borderlands were distributed among kings Polemon of Pontus, Aristoboulos of Lesser Armenia, Antioch of Commagena and Parsman of Iberia.

Parsman I's second wife had her way: in AD 58 her son Mithridates (Mihrdat) I became Iberia's next king. Here Roman historians and archaeological finds, incontrovertible sources, take priority over the Georgian chronicles (compiled when 700 years' oral history had distorted, obliterated or invented many facts). The Georgian chronicles ignore Mithridates (Mihrdat) and name two sons of Parsman I, Kartam and Bratman (neither attested by archaeology or Roman historians) as his joint heirs, followed by other generations of diarchs (Parsman and Kaos, Azork and Armazel). Mihrdat's long reign of 48 years may imply that chroniclers have fused two or more reigns into one, but the mention of his mother in an Armazi inscription suggests that Mihrdat was crowned as an infant, under the dowager queen's regency. The Armenian historian Moses Khorenatsi states that Mithridates died at the end of the 70s and was replaced, for the reign of Emperor Domitian, by Kartam; the Georgian chronicles place the Alan invasions of the early 70s in the reign of the next generation, Azork and Armazel. Further confusion arises from the puzzling Greek inscription on a silver bowl in a rich Armazi burial, 'I, King Flavius Dades, bestowed this on Bersoumas, Vitaxa': Mithridates is unlikely to have acquired a

Roman sobriquet (although a later Abkhaz 'king' did call himself 'Julianus'). Perhaps, the bowl refers to a fourth-century king, the name Flavius indicating his alignment with the emperor Constantine;[10] or Dades may be a rendering of Tsate, the name of at least two kings of Colchis.

The crux of Mithridates' reign was the peace treaty of AD 63 between Rome and Parthia, making Greater Armenia a Parthian vassal, but giving Rome the symbolic power to approve its kings, and ensuring peace between Rome, Parthia and Iberia for the next 50 years. Armenia, granted stability, emerged as a regional power, but Mithridates used his alliance with the Ossetians to assert Iberian strength. In the 60s the Ossetians were allowed over the Daryal Pass to harass Romans and Parthians. In 72 Ossetians invaded Armenia: King Tiridat escaped only by cutting a lasso thrown round his neck, and ended hostilities by marrying the Ossetian princess Satinik. Nero, who had welcomed Tiridat to Rome, planned an anti-Ossetian campaign, and thus helped Armenia drive the Ossetians back to the Kura river, kill their kings and break the Iberian–Ossetian alliance. Only with Ossetian help, however, could Mithridates have retaken his lands south of the Kura from invading Armenians.

The pro-Armenian stance of Mithridates' Iberian nobles discouraged further ventures. To thwart the Ossetians, Vespasian sent Roman legionaries to fortify Armazi, as a Greek inscription of AD 75 by the Kura river proves, naming Mithridates the Iberian as 'friend of Caesars and king of Rome-loving Iberians'. (Other inscriptions at Armazi, in the local Aramaic script and in Greek, confirm Mithridates as the son of the 'great king Parsman'; a fourteen-line Aramaic inscription of the Vitaxa – Middle Persian *pitiakhsh*, vizier – Sharapas, in the Armazi necropolis, praises Mithridates' military triumphs.) Sporadic conflict with Armenia marked the rest of Mithridates' (or Kartam's) reign. At one point an Armenian general was imprisoned in the Daryal gorge; at another, Armenian forces occupied Mtskheta to make Iberia withdraw from the borderlands; later, an Armenian army was defeated in Javakheti and Iberia regained these borderlands and the fortress of Tsunda. Iberian–Armenian–Alan concord then ensued.

The Romans' stance is now unclear: a Latin inscription 45 miles west of Baku places the XII Fulminata legion in Caucasian Albania after AD 84, but if Rome was assisting Iberian aggression against Caucasian Albania, it did so discreetly, for both states were officially Roman allies. (Trajan began a war with Parthia later, in AD 114; open war between Iberia and Caucasian Albania erupted only in AD 130.)

In AD 106 Mithridates was succeeded by Amazasp I, very likely Mithridates' brother, who took part in Trajan's war on Parthia, and died at Nisibis in AD 116, and whose verse epitaph (in Greek) in Rome runs: 'Glorious king's offspring Amazasp, brother of King Mithridates, whose

fatherland is by the Caspian gates, an Iberian, son of an Iberian, is buried here: by the sacred city built by Nikator (Nisibis, today's Nusaybin in southeast Turkey). By the river Mygdonia that waters the olive trees, this companion of the leader of heroic sons, as he came to his commander for a battle with the Parthians, died before he could stain his mighty hand, alas, in enemy blood: O spear, and bow and sword blade, a foot-soldier and a horseman, as modest as a maiden.' Trajan's victory made Armenia first a Roman province and then a dependent kingdom under the Arshakid dynasty: it was now harmless to Iberia, as was Parthia, which was at peace with Rome for the next 45 years.

Amazasp's son Parsman II, soon known as the 'valiant', took the Iberian throne in AD 117. The Georgian chronicles suggest that, because Armenia sided with Rome, Parsman II made overtures to Iran, resulting in a Roman invasion fatal to Parsman. Certainly, Parsman II, a cosmopolitan who, apart from Georgian, spoke Aramaic, Greek and Persian, broke free of Rome, and in AD 129 refused to pay homage to Emperor Hadrian, then in Cappadocia. Hadrian had sent to Parsman gifts (including an elephant) more valuable than to any other king of Asia Minor or Transcaucasia. Parsman II insulted the emperor by giving in return a paltry batch of gold-embroidered cloaks, which Hadrian in pique made 300 criminals wear when he sent them to die in the gladiatorial arena. To deter Rome Parsman II, like his predecessors, opened the Daryal Pass and let Ossetian hordes through Iberia to loot Rome-dominated Caucasian Albania and Armenia, as well as Parthia: King Vologes II of Parthia had to pay a heavy ransom.

Under Hadrian, the Romans established relations with Colchian tribes. In AD 131 Hadrian sent to Iberia his close adviser Flavius Arrian, governor of Cappadocia. Arrian toured Colchis as much out of curiosity to see legendary sites as for political purposes. He depicts a turbulent fluctuation of tribal powers and boundaries: from Trebizond northeast to Dioscourias, Arrian lists the hostile, anarchic Mingrelian and Laz Sannoi, Machelonoi and Henniochs under King Anchialos (whom Trajan recognized), then Zudreitai (an unknown ethnos) on the Çoruh estuary, while the Kartvelian Laz controlled most of coastal Colchis up to Dioscourias.[11] In Dioscourias the Sanigs (Svans) and Abazgs (Abkhaz) escaped Roman jurisdiction. Other Caucasian tribes, like the Apshils, were now powerful: at least one king was recognized by Trajan, Romanizing himself as Julianus and seeking Roman protection. Sixty years later Marcus Aurelius exiled an Armenian satrap, Tiridat, for murdering the Apshil king.

Despite Roman interest, Colchis appears to have been barbaric in the second century AD. A change in burial patterns may be due to Christian influence in the third century, but there was no strong Colchian state to adopt or repress a new religion.

Roman influence left a permanent mark in Iberia. Roman mortar made stone fortifications stronger and taller; Iberian nobles built Roman villas with baths and underfloor heating; Roman silver coins ousted Parthian drachmas from Iberia. In AD 131 Arrian visited Iberia, possibly as ambassador, and drew up a plausible and comprehensive survey of Colchis and Iberia for Hadrian. Either in AD 134, or AD 138 under Antoninus Pius, Parsman II decided to repair Iberia's relations with Rome. He made territorial concessions, then went with his wife and son to Rome, where he was received warmly, was invited to make a sacrifice at the Capitol and saw a statue of himself on horseback erected in the temple to Bellona.[12] The Iberian king Parsman's visit is attested by Cassius Dio and by a semi-legible slab found in the port of Ostia, which dates the visit to the consulate of Fabianus. Yet again, we have a chronological conflict. Fabianus was consul AD 141–4, but Parsman II probably died in 138. If Parsman III, Parsman II's grandson, was Antoninus Pius's guest, he was too young to travel with a wife and child, for he was born in 134 and was under his mother's regency until about 155.

Parsman was quickly followed by King Vologes, either II or III, of Parthia, complaining to Rome of Iberian treachery and asking for the return of his throne. Parsman's diplomacy, however, earned him a place in Georgian folk legend for single combat with Persian lion-fighters; the chronicles credit him with expelling a Persian-backed usurper. The Parthians, however, had the last laugh; Parsman the Valiant was poisoned by a cook in Parthian pay.

Parsman II's succession is not clear. The Georgian chronicle mentions a Ghadam (perhaps Radamist) who ruled very briefly. More cogently, a Greek and Aramaic tomb inscription in Armazi, reads: 'I am Seraphita, daughter of Zevakh the younger, pitiakhsh of Pharsman the king, and wife of Iodmandagan the victorious, winner of many conquests, master of the court of Ksefarnug, the great king of the Iberians, and son of Agrippa, master of the court of King Pharsman. Woe, woe, for the sake of her who . . . died at the age of twenty-one.' Was Iberia in the generation following Parsman II ruled by a Ksefarnug, who, judging by the unusual failure to refer to his parenthood or legitimacy, and by his Ossetian name, may have been a usurper, or a commoner elevated to the throne by marriage?

Ghadam (perhaps the same king as Ksefarnug) is recorded as dying after three years, leaving the throne to an infant Parsman III, who had a long and uneventful reign. Parsman II was followed in AD 185 by his son Amazasp III, who repelled an Ossetian invasion and then faced a rebellion by his aristocracy, allegedly in Armenian and Ossetian pay. Amazasp III was killed in battle in AD 189, and his throne taken by a rebellious nephew, Rev I.

Despite Rev's violent accession, he is called 'the Just', though this may be merely a nominal epithet, as used by Parthian kings. (Christian chroniclers may have honoured Rev because he tolerated Christianity, then making headway in Iberia's Jewish community.) Family connections – Rev may be a son of King Vologas II of Armenia, and thus have established the Arsacid dynasty in Iberia; he married a Greek princess, Sephelia – kept Iberia out of war. In AD 216 Rev was succeeded by his son Vache, who was, in turn, in AD 234, succeeded by his son Bakur I, who was followed in AD 249 by his son Mihrdat II: these four reigns are mentioned only in Georgian chronicles, and evidently made no impact abroad. Kings Vache and Mihrdat II had, however, to deal with the resurgence of Persia, when King Ardashir (AD 226–41) defeated the Parthian Artaban V and founded the Sassanid dynasty, giving Iran a new Zoroastrian fervour. The only evidence of contact is an Aramaic inscription on a silver chalice, probably a diplomat's gift, found in an Armazi sarcophagus: 'Papak, Vitaxa of the divine Ardashir, gave this chalice to Arzamas, Vitaxa of the country Gurzan (Iberia)'. A coin dates the burial (if not the chalice) after AD 253.

In the second and third centuries Iberia was strikingly uninterested in unification with Colchis: archaeology shows trade and culture crossing the Likhi mountains, but there were no dynastic marriages and no treaties between Iberia and Colchis. Now the Romans merely kept garrisons on the Black Sea coast, leaving the Colchians to their own devices, although Emperor Septimus Severus temporarily subdued Lazica (as Colchis was now called) early in the third century. Of Colchian politics all we surmise is that the Laz were now dominant, and a Laz king Pacorus (Bakur, a Persian name) was recognized by Antoninus Pius.

Iberia, strong and peaceful, withdraws from history after AD 150: international trade flourished, and when disorders in Colchis disrupted the flow of goods from east to west, they went over the mountains via Ossetia. There were impregnable fortresses on either side of the Kura, but also prosperous aristocratic residences spaced well apart around Mtskheta, each with its own private estate.

Iberia resurfaced in history a century later when the Parthian empire collapsed and an aggressive Sassanid Iran under Shapur I (242–72) overshadowed Transcaucasia. Sassanid inscriptions name Amazasp III as king of Iberia from AD 260 to 265; since this coincides with the end of Mihrdat II's rule, we suppose that Amazasp III was a Persian nominee. Mihrdat II and the phantom Amazasp III were succeeded by Aspagur I, an Arsacid and presumably a son of Mihrdat II. Aspagur's struggle with Sassanid Persia, supported by Rome under Aurelius and Carus, brought Iberia back into classical history, but Roman support was too passive to save his throne, and Aspagur (Aspacures to the Romans) took refuge with the Ossetians, dying in exile, probably in AD 284. Sassanid influence was

extensive: many middle Persian terms now entered the Georgian language. Some tell us about Iberian society in the third century: *aznauri*, meaning freeman, patrician, or member of the gentry, comes from an Iranian root, *ara-* 'of good birth'; *roch'ik'i* (from the Persian *roch*, meaning 'day') was a day's ration for slaves; *khark'i* (from Persian *harag*), means 'tax' or 'tribute'. Impressive fortifications and irrigation canals, enlarged by successive kings of Iberia, required slave labour (King Urnayr of Caucasian Albania used Greek prisoners of war as masons and potters in the fourth century).

Shapur I invaded not only Iberia: he moved west via Armenia to Colchis–Lazica and overcame the Machelonoi and Henniochs. Shortly before, in AD 253 the Ostrogoths (then confused with Scythians) carried out devastating raids all down the eastern coast of the Black Sea, forcing Roman garrisons and civilians to flee (only the Roman garrison at Pityus–Pitsunda staved off the Goths); at the same time the Roman empire was assailed on the Danube and the Rhine. This tempted an Iranian army to aim, once more, for the Black Sea. Shapur's triumph was conquering Lazica and capturing the Roman emperor Valerian in AD 260 (one Roman author, Julius Capitolinus, names the Iberians as intermediaries in ransoming Valerian). A trilingual Sassanid inscription lists Colchis and 'Machelonia' as Iranian territory, but the Laz soon drove Shapur out of Lazica. Colchis–Lazica was, however, lost to Rome. For a while the Iranian Sarmatians under Saurmat took Lazica.

Shapur claimed Iberia as a vassal state, although the Sassanid-nominated king of Iberia, Amazasp III, was recognized as an ally, rather than a subject, and listed as the fourth highest dignitary in the Sassanid realm. *The Life of Georgia* acknowledges Amazasp's power, but says that 'he became fond of Persians' and fought first against invading Ossetians, then against Romans and Mingrelians from Colchis, as well as his own nobles, in a battle leading to King Shapur I's defeat and Amazasp III's death. The Roman-Persian treaty of Nisibis in 297–8 brought forty years of peace between Rome and Persia, and a recognition of Roman suzerainty over Iberia and Armenia, whose kings had to receive symbols of recognition from Rome. Colchis, however, only returned to the Hellenic world when Emperor Constantine moved his capital to Byzantium-Constantinople and, in AD 315, sent new garrisons and a viceroy to Phasis.

Aspagur's daughter Abeshura married Mihran, a Sassanid Persian prince (according to *The Life of Georgia*; *The Conversion of Georgia* calls Mihran the son of an otherwise unattested Iberian king Lev). Mihran may have belonged to the Mihranid clan of the Parthians. Although Princess Abeshura died in Mihran's infancy, he acceded in AD 284 to the throne of Iberia, began a new dynasty, later known as the Chosroids, and was acceptable to both Persia and Iberia (even though the descent from Parnavaz was

broken). Despite Iranian origins and Sassanid power, however, Mihran, Christianized as King Mirian III, was, over a long reign, to change radically Iberia's orbit, making it gravitate towards the Hellenic world.

3
Conversion

✠

> Æëtes: 'I think it pays us to join the side whose attitude is more reasonable and whose goodwill towards their allies is not liable to fluctuation . . . When the Persians learn from us of this decision and realize its implications their hearts will with good reason warm to us.'
>
> *Agathias Scholasticus Histories*

The first 30 years of Mirian III's reign were stable: the Iberian monarchy controlled the local dukes, not yet hereditary lords, and still appointed by the king. Shapur I's aggression had passed and the steppe nomads now threatened the empires of Rome and Persia: Georgians suffered less external pressure. Up to the Treaty of Nisibis in 298, Mirian, like a client king, sided with the Persians in the Sassanid–Roman wars. Then he became Rome's client. To judge by the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a fourth-century Roman merchants' map,[1] international trade routes crossed Georgia, connecting Colchis and Iberia, from Sebastopolis (once Dioscourias, now Sukhumi) to Kaspi, Mtskheta and on to Armenia and Persia. Christianity was penetrating Colchis and, possibly, Iberia. Procopius states that 'the Laz church is age-old'. Certainly, Christianity had, by 300, a bridgehold in coastal cities: the first epistle of Peter was addressed to Christians in Pontus, and in 325 Pityus (Pitsunda) sent Bishop Stratophilos to the Council of Nicaea. (Pityus was where Empress Eudoxia exiled St John Chrysostom in 404.)

Making Christianity the state religion was, however, a political decision, not a matter of conscience. The Treaty of Nisibis in 298 brought Iberia, with Colchis, into the Roman sphere of influence; the rise of Emperor Constantine the Great, his Edict of Milan of 313 tolerating Christians and restoring their property, were followed by military triumphs and the empire's capital moving from Rome to Byzantium, renamed Constantinople. First Armenia, then Iberia, and finally Caucasian Albania

discarded their own pagan religion and Persia's Zoroastrianism for Constantinople's Christianity.

The Conversion of Georgia is medieval Georgian literature's richest composition. Most scholars agree that it is an eleventh-century (some say eighth-century[2]) collation of earlier material, possibly from the sixth century.[3] But the elements of legend and folklore are now impossible to disentangle. The Georgian story is that Nino, a female slave ('tqve' then also meant outsider and captive) and nun (of Christian parentage), a refugee from Cappadocia, appeared in the Jewish community preaching Christianity, that she achieved fame by curing Mirian's queen Nana (his second wife) of a mortal illness. Subsequently, while hunting, Mirian was engulfed by an eclipse of the sun, which reappeared only after Mirian prayed to God. This was a divine warning to seek instruction from Nino: Mirian then had built in Mtskheta the cathedral of the Living Pillar (Georgian: *Sveti tskhoveli*), so-called because angels erected overnight a pillar too heavy for the labourers (traces of this church survive on the site of the medieval cathedral that replaced it). The usual date ascribed to Mirian's conversion is 334, but the sun's eclipse that year was visible no nearer than Alexandria in Egypt.[4] The year 317 is the only one that century when a total eclipse of the sun was visible at Mtskheta. To convert before the Council of Nicaea in 325, when Rome and Byzantium proclaimed Christianity the state religion, seems premature, but this early date fits the account of the conversion of King Trdat III of Armenia in 301. Armenian sources have Trdat throw St Gregory the Illuminator, his Christian secretary, into a pit. In 288 fifty nuns, refugees from persecution, arrived in Armenia; King Trdat insisted on marrying the most beautiful of them, Ripsime, and on her refusal to break her vow of chastity martyred 37 nuns. Only after thirteen years of madness, in which Trdat became, at least metaphorically, a wild boar, was Gregory rescued from the pit to cure and convert the king. Gregory then became Armenia's first Catholicos, and the nun Nunua moved to Iberia to preach to Georgian merchants. A later medieval tradition names Iberia's first Christian king as King Bakur, maternal great-uncle of Peter the Iberian, reputedly Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (411–491). An interpolation in the chronicles, backed by some archaeological evidence,[5] has St Andrew in 37 converting the Laz at Khulo in the mountains and taking his mission east to Atsquri. The Roman historian Rufinus of Aquileia (in his translation of Eusebius' *History of the Church*) in 402 confirmed two elements of the Georgian account, a captive woman curing the queen, and an eclipse converting the king.[6] The Georgian Orthodox Church records that the first archbishop of Kartli, Iovane, held office from 335 to 363, a succession unbroken until the Russian Orthodox Church subsumed the Georgian Church in 1811.[7]

Trdat III was murdered by Armenian pagan nobles in 330. Mirian, however, toppled with impunity the old idols and converted at least the

lowland Iberians: Nino fell ill and died while converting the Iberian highlanders. The Iberians were perhaps prepared for Christianity by the missionary Mani (the Manichean prophet) under Shapur I in the mid-200s: Manicheanism recognized Christ as Messiah, although worshipping light like Zoroastrians, and frowned on carnality. Christianity had rooted in Colchis (Lazica to Romans, Egrisi to Iberians): a church existed in Nokalakevi in the fourth century, when Byzantine authors date the conversion of the Laz and the Apshils (today's Abkhaz), even though Lazica's kings, in the sixth century, sometimes deserted their faith under Persian pressure. The Iberian Church was autocephalic as early as 487 – as confirmed by the synod of 681 in Constantinople – but Lazica's bishops for the next six centuries answered to Constantinople's patriarch, although by the seventh century Poti had a metropolitan bishop and Sukhumi an archbishop.

The western and eastern Georgian Churches remained separate. In Iberia a Georgian alphabet and Georgian liturgy soon followed conversion to Christianity; in Lazica the ecclesiastic and sole written language was Greek. In Iberia, church services in the indigenous language were a unifying force; Lazica's kings and tribes, like its ecclesiastic language, had no centripetal force to bind the country's statehood. Christianity brought the two Georgian states closer, however. Georgian Christians from both Lazica and Iberia soon found fame abroad: Evagrius the Iberian from the Black Sea coast was a noted fourth-century ascetic in Egypt,[8] while in the fifth and sixth centuries Peter the Iberian (possibly the theologian Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite), a great-nephew of Prince Varaz-Bakur of Iberia, founded a monastery in Jerusalem. From 400 Georgian monks, like other nationalities, celebrated Mass in their own language at the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (where a Georgian mosaic inscription dates from 430). Centres where Georgian monks translated from Greek, Syriac and Armenian appeared early in the fifth century: Mar Saba in Palestine, Antioch in Syria, Thebes in Egypt.

In 338 Christian Iberia underwent a test of strength: Mirian made war on the north Caucasian peoples who too easily reverted from being mercenaries of Iberia to invaders. In 337 the much-feared Emperor Constantine died, and Persia's Shah Shapur II (309–379) started a 25-year war to regain lost hegemony in Asia Minor and the Caucasus. Like the Armenians, Mirian III tried to appease both Shapur and Rome. In 360 the Armenian and Iberian kings received subsidies and gifts from the Romans to keep them on board.

In 361 King Mirian died. For his last sixteen years he may have shared power with his son Rev II, but was succeeded by Saurmag II, apparently unrelated to Mirian and bearing an Ossetic name. Saurmag II's reign began with war. Emperor Julian attacked the Persian capital,

Ctesiphon, but was forced back, dying two years later of his wounds. His successor had to concede Armenia to Persia; Iberia is not mentioned in the 363 treaty, but Saurmag II understandably joined King Arshak II (*reg.* 345–36) of Armenia in fighting Persian invasion. Arshak was captured and executed; in 368 the Persians invaded Iberia, overthrew Saurmag and crowned Mirian's second son Varaz-Bakur (known as Aspacures in western sources).

To Emperor Valens this coup breached the 363 treaty; in 370 he sent 12,000 men into Iberia under Terentius. Varaz-Bakur accepted a compromise: the Iberian kingdom split into two Saurmag II regained the right bank of the Kura and the borderlands with Lazica and Armenia, while Varaz-Bakur and his successor Mihrdat III, as Persian vassals, kept northeastern Iberia. The division lasted only eight years: on 9 August 378 the Romans were crushed by Goths and Alans at Adrianopolis, and could no longer protect Iberia. In 384 and 387, at the Peace of Acilisene, the Romans signed away Iberia and most of Armenia, which split into a small northwestern Roman protectorate, Lesser Armenia, and a large eastern Persarmenia (which in 428, when King Artashir IV was ousted, became a Persian province).

By 378 Varaz-Bakur had ousted Saurmag II: all Iberia became a Sassanid fiefdom again. Varaz-Bakur was then briefly succeeded by Mihrdat III, who bequeathed the throne to Varaz-Bakur (Aspacures) II. Varaz-Bakur II probably consolidated Mirian III's legacy. Byzantine emperors and patriarchs sent the Georgian Church bishops and priests to hold services, and architects to build churches; as was Byzantine practice, they offered texts (initially, the New Testament, the Psalms and the Liturgy) in the local language. They sent men who were, even by modern standards, trained linguists as well as designers, to give the Iberians, as they had given the Armenians and would give the Caucasian Albanians, a unique alphabet, modelled somewhat on the Greek, but adapted to the peculiarities of Georgian, effectively a one-sound-one-symbol alphabet, albeit easier to carve in stone than write on parchment.[9] The earliest extant inscription in Georgian dates from AD 430; the Georgian alphabet was devised perhaps decades before. Literacy was as important in political unification and conversion to Christianity as was alliance with Rome and Byzantium, or the simplicity of enforced monotheism. Iberia not only received Christianity, it also disseminated it. The recently rediscovered ecclesiastical language of Caucasian Albania, Old Udi, borrowed Old Georgian vocabulary: Old Georgian *aghvseba* (Easter) became Old Udi *axsiba*; *madli* (grace) became *madil*; *saxe* (image) remained *saxe*; *savrdzeli* (throne) became *sa'owrzel*; Greek terms also entered Old Udi via Georgian. Caucasian Albanian kings were renowned for piety: King Vache II retired in 463 to become a monk, although he had been forced to abjure Christianity in

460; King Vachagan II put up a monument to St Gregory the Illuminator in 489. In subsequent centuries, Iberian kings helped Byzantium convert the Ossetians, too.

Despite the Peace of Acilisene and Sassanid dominance, Varaz-Bakur II went on building Christian churches (Persia wavered between tolerance and oppression of non-Zoroastrians: Shapur II violently imposed Zoroastrianism on Christian Armenia, but his grandson Shapur III – 383–8 – let a Christian vassal govern 'Persarmenia'). The Peace of Acilisene led to prolonged peace, but Persia had the intention and ability to subordinate Iberia, as it had most of Armenia. Meanwhile, Rome / Byzantium began appropriating Klarjeti, the part of southwest Iberia closest to Pontus and the Black Sea.

Varaz-Bakur II was succeeded in 394 by his brother-in-law Trdat, who was followed in 406 by Varaz-Bakur's son, Parsman IV. Parsman IV, Syriac sources state, was, while heir to the throne, an officer at the Constantinople court, but had to return to Iberia after a liaison with Empress Eudoxia. In a three-year reign, he asserted Iberian independence, withholding taxes from the Persians and making war (using the White Huns as a proxy army) on the Romans. Mihrdat IV, a younger brother of Varaz-Bakur II, succeeded Parsman IV and fought on both fronts. He succeeded in winning back Klarjeti, but was captured on the eastern front and died in Persian captivity, at some point between 411 and the mid-420s. His son, King Archil I, reigned about twenty years, but faced in the end a far more formidable enemy, the Sassanid shah Yezdigerd II (438–57), who was determined to abolish the kingdoms of both Caucasian Albania and Iberia. Yezdigerd summoned the notables of all three Caucasian countries to Persia and ordered them to convert to Zoroastrianism, sending them back with cohorts of Zoroastrian priests. Popular uprisings were crushed, but the fifth-century atesh-ga (fire temple) excavated in Tbilisi proves the partial success of Yezdigerd's proselytising. His successor Shah Peroz (459–84) abolished the kingdom of Caucasian Albania, but Iberia held out under Archil's son Mihrdat V. Archil, according to *The Life of Kartli*, even counter-attacked by raiding Caucasian Albania. Mihrdat V was married to Sagdukht, the daughter of Barzabod, a Persian prince, which may have mitigated Sassanid Persia's hostility.

During the fourth century, while Iberia resisted encroachment from both western and eastern empires, Lazica exploited Iberia's predicament and consolidated its territory, from the outskirts of Trebizond to Pityus (Pitsunda) under the Caucasus range, from the Black Sea to the Likhi range. By Emperor Theodosius' death in 395, Laz aristocrats dominated a population of Laz, Mingrelians, Svans and Abkhaz. Lazica recovered from Iberia the border province of Argveti and the key trade and military posts of Shorapani and Skanda. Lazica's economy boomed: the River Rioni

was then navigable all the way to Shorapani; Lazica's grain, flax, timber, manpower and handicrafts were exported to Byzantium. Lazica was now strategically crucial. After the Goth invasions, the Huns in the 370s controlled the foothills of the north Caucasus, and Lazica's mountain passes in Svanetia and Abkhazia were gates to the Roman empire which needed guarding. Even so, in 395 the Huns broke through the Caspian Gates and for a century, until they were tame Byzantine mercenaries, menaced all Transcaucasia.

Lazica, unlike Iberia, lacked independence: to Byzantium it was a contributor to the treasury, and its choice of king needed imperial approval. By the fifth century, however, according to Procopius of Caesarea, Lazica withheld taxes and army recruits, and its requests for endorsement of a new king were mere formalities. The king now appointed dukes to rule the Abkhaz and Svans without consultation, and garrisoned Sebastopolis himself. But Lazica and Byzantium had a common interest in resisting incursions by Huns, Ossetians and Persians. In 456 King Gobaz I (the name meaning 'bull's forelimb' is Ossetic) declared independence; Byzantine forces sent to crush him had to withdraw. Both sides sought Iranian military support, in vain, for Iran was fighting Turkic Hephthalite invaders, in a struggle so desperate that for a time Persia and Byzantium became allies in order to beat back Turkic nomads from their borders. Gobaz (known as Gumbazes to the Greeks) sent envoys to Byzantium and, to appease the emperor, stood down in favour of his son (already co-ruler of Lazica). In 465, given an assurance of personal inviolability, Gobaz answered a summons and came, in Persian costume and with a 'Medean' escort, to Constantinople. He charmed Emperor Leo I with his wit and a display of Christian piety:[10] the only punishment for Lazica's rebellion was the ceding of temporal power to Byzantium of 100 miles of coastline east of Trebizond. For the next 60 years, Lazica coexisted peacefully with Byzantium. Gobaz's only other conflict was with the Svans who sought Iranian support in an ultimately futile attempt to win back their own fortresses.

In the middle of the fifth century Iberia was revitalized by the accession of Vakhtang I, Gorgasali (*Wolfhead*), a king as charismatic, and as legendary, as Parnavaz I or Mirian III, and, like Parnavaz, credited with uniting, if only temporarily and partially, the two Kartvelian kingdoms, and, furthermore, overthrowing Persian suzerainty. As with Parnavaz and Mirian, sifting out fact from myth and conjecture, which lie at the basis of Juansher's possibly eighth-century *Life of Vakhtang* contained in *The Life of Kartli,* is difficult. It is plausible that he was Mihrdat V's son by a Christian Persian mother, Sagdukht, and succeeded to the throne at the age of seven, his widowed mother being regent. Queen Sagdukht dutifully visited her father Barzabod, who was the Iranian *vitaxa*, or Governor-General, in

Bardavi, the capital of Caucasian Albanian, and had him beg the shah to allow Vakhtang to remain Christian. Barzabod and the shah responded by declaring both Christianity and Zoroastrianism official religions and sending a chief magus, Binkaran, to preside alongside the Christian bishop. (By 410, a Persian Christian Church was generally tolerated, for its Nestorian and later monophysite doctrines alienated it from Byzantium.)

The alleged length of Vakhtang's reign is remarkable: if he inherited the throne in 447, then his reported death in battle (from an arrow shot by a former servant who knew where the gaps in his armour were) in 522 is a remarkable ending for a man of 82 (although King Erekle II is attested in 1795 fighting the Persians on horseback at a similar age). Possibly, an Iberian king Gourgenes mentioned by Procopius as supporting Justinian against the Persians in 520 was a successor to Vakhtang unrecorded by Georgian chroniclers, and not a Greek distortion of 'Gorgasali'.

Like his famous predecessors, Vakhtang bound both empires to Iberia by dynastic marriages: at age nineteen, he married Balendukht, apparently a daughter of Hormizd III (457–9). She died giving birth to Prince Dachi; next, Vakhtang married Helena, a relative, but not the daughter, of the Emperor Zeno (historians attribute two daughters to Zeno, neither called Helena; moreover, Byzantium forbade legitimate princesses to marry abroad). Vakhtang's rule, according to Juansher's *Life*, aimed to maintain equilibrium: he presided over a privy council, which his *spaspeti* (commander-in-chief) dominated, and which included a Christian bishop and a Zoroastrian magus.

Primarily however, the king was a warrior, fighting for or against either empire, as Kartli's interests required. At age sixteen, Vakhtang won fame, attacking (in support of Persian interests, too) the Ossetians and Huns, rescuing his sister Mirandukht from Hun captivity and sharing his booty with his Caucasian Albanian and Persian allies. Ossetians and Huns became auxiliaries in the Georgian army (their weapons are found in common burial grounds). This war gave Vakhtang long-term control of the Alans', Chechens' and Dagestanis' access to the Transcaucasian passes. It also won him the shah's daughter Balendukht as queen.

Backed by the shah's connivance and army, Vakhtang campaigned, at the end of the 460s, to unite Lazica / Egrisi with Kartli. He had already expanded eastwards into today's Kakhetia, and now controlled Svanetia: next he reconquered Lazica's strategic borderland district, Argveti. From Byzantium he retrieved his southwestern province of Klarjeti, appointing Artavaz, his foster-sibling (always an important relative in Georgian culture), to rule it as duke and to build fortresses (notably the key town of Artanuji), churches and monasteries. Vakhtang, however Christian and pro-Greek, cherished his Persian heritage: the stones of Artanuji have typical Sassanid motifs of deer drinking at the wellspring of life, while Latin crosses

intertwine with Zoroastrian motifs. The mountainous terrain of Klarjeti was a refuge if the Persians overwhelmed Kartli; it also controlled the passes to the Black Sea and river Çoruh. At this time, Vakhtang fortified the summer royal residence of Ujarma, between Tbilisi and Kakhetia, against threats from Persia, Armenia or Caucasian Albania. Hereti, Georgia's easternmost province, on the borders of Caucasian Albania, became a principality ruled by the crown prince.

Power in an enlarged Iberia was redistributed: a *spaspeti* (ranking as grand duke) governed the capital cities Mtskheta and Tbilisi and their surroundings: Juansher lists nine provincial dukes, whose remit covers all Vakhtang's acquisitions, including inner Egrisi and Svanetia (under duke Samnaghir). This list excludes Abkhazia: most of Lazica remained a kingdom under Byzantine suzerainty.

Later, Vakhtang helped Shah Peroz fight the Hephthalites who threatened the northeastern borders of Iran; in 472 he sided again with Persia against Byzantium and thus controlled all Lazica. In 467, before war against Byzantium broke out, Vakhtang had switched sides, asking Byzantium to acknowledge the Iberian Church's autocephaly. He wanted the Iberian king, not the patriarch in Constantinople, to appoint bishops; soon Iberia's (and later Lazica's) bishops were the king's subordinates (and often kinsmen), thus integrating Church and State. (This move followed Zeno's *Henotikon*, a declaration of unity which tried to reconcile orthodox dyophysites and the monophysites who dominated the Armenian and other eastern Churches.) In 467 Vakhtang and his archbishop Mikael quarrelled violently. Mikael kicked the king and broke his tooth, and was then sent (with the broken tooth) to Constantinople for his lèse-majesty (he was incarcerated in a dyophysite monastery). In Antioch and then in Constantinople, Petre, a more compliant churchman, was ordained catholicos of Iberia, and Samoel I (467–502) archbishop (twelve more bishops were appointed, at Vakhtang's request, by the Byzantine patriarch). The Georgian Church ceased, for a while, being a bone of contention between the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch. (In some aspects of the liturgy, for example the insertion of the phrase 'who was crucified' into the *Trisagion* or *Sanctus*, the Georgians conformed to the doctrines of Antioch and the bishops of Amasya.) King Vakhtang and Archbishop Mikael may have quarrelled about doctrine: possibly, the king rejected monophysitism – the Armenian historian Lazar Parbetsi deplores Vakhtang's 'abandoning Armenians to their fate'; perhaps the king had declared loyalty to Antioch, not Constantinople; most probably, the archbishop defied the king's coup against the Church. To escape turbulent bishops in Mtskheta, Vakhtang designated Tbilisi, 20 miles to the east, as the new capital of Iberia; he built a new cathedral in Mtskheta, making it the ecclesiastical capital. (The chronicle relates a stereotypical hunting story of Vakhtang's founding the city – 'Tbilisi' means 'of warm

[springs]' – after his falcon struck down a pheasant over a hot spring.) Vakhtang built the magnificent Bolnisi cathedral (473–95), which, like that of Artanuji, mixes Christian Maltese crosses with palm fronds and intricate Zoroastrian goldsmithery.

Vakhtang also created new bishoprics in Kakhetia and Hereti, the strategic border provinces. As Iberian bishoprics spread, so did Orthodoxy and the Georgian ecclesiastic language, even for minorities whose native language was Ossetian or Chechen. Yet bishops in Lazica / Egrisi still answered to Constantinople, not to Vakhtang's Archbishop Samoel in Mtskheta.

Politically, militarily and economically secure, now related by marriage to the Byzantine emperor, Vakhtang boldly confronted Persia. In the late 470s he expelled Zoroastrian priests from Kartli and requested armed support from Constantinople. In the four months before the Byzantines responded, central Kartli suffered a Persian invasion: the Byzantine envoy merely negotiated a truce between Vakhtang and Shah Peroz. Iberia now had to pay tribute to, and fight for, Persia; the shah agreed only to stop propagating Zoroastrianism in Iberia.

In 482, after Iberians and Persians were defeated by the Hephthalites, Vakhtang reneged. In Tbilisi he arrested and executed the Vitaxa Varsken, a Zoroastrian convert, more Persian viceroy than Vakhtang's subordinate. Varsken would soon be demonized in the first pearl of Georgian prose, *The Martyrdom of Shushanik* (attributed to Iakov, Bishop of Tsurtavi, Shushanik's confessor), which relates how Varsken in 475 tortured to death his Christian Armenian wife Shushanik for refusing to apostatize. Executing Varsken was a generous gesture to the Armenians and a mortal insult to the shah: Varsken had recently become *vitaxa* of Caucasian Albania, where the Iberian king no longer had allies, after Vakhtang's uncle Barzabod and his successor, Vakhtang's cousin Varaz-Bakur, had died. But the timing seemed auspicious: Shah Peroz had withdrawn troops from Armenia to crush a rebellion in Caucasian Albania. Shushanik's father, Prince Vardan II of Armenia, supported Vakhtang, but the Armenian general Vahan Mamikonian distrusted his own men, the Iberians and their Hun allies, and was reluctant to fight, saying: 'I know the Iranians' strength and fearlessness, and the Byzantines' weakness and deceitfulness.' Eventually reinforced by Vahan Mamikonian and a contingent of now pro-Byzantine Huns, the Iberians had an initial success, driving out a Persian army. Then Iberia was devastated by revenge expeditions. In 483 Mihran's and Atrnerse's Persian armies overwhelmed Iberia and Armenia respectively. Vakhtang fled to the mountains and asked for Armenian assistance; the Armenians defeated the Iranians and advanced into Kartli. But no Hun army turned up, and Armenian nobles hung back. As battle lines were drawn on the lower reaches of the Kura, Armenian nobles sent envoys to the Persians,

offering to desert. Desertions in mid-battle demoralized the Caucasian army: the Armenians fell back into Tao, and Armenia was ravaged by the Persian general Hazaravukht. Hazaravukht moved into Kartli, to arrest, expel or kill Vakhtang, before returning to northeast Persia to attack the Hephthalites. Vakhtang's own nobles abandoned him; Byzantium, preoccupied with fighting the Ostrogoths, offered no help. Vakhtang fled to Lazica. He returned to Iberia in 484, when Shah Peroz was killed fighting the Hephthalites, General Hazaravukht left for Persia, and the next shah, Balash, still unsure of his throne, sought peace on his northwestern front.

This peace was short-lived: in 491 Shah Kavad I began a seventeen-year war against Byzantium, when Emperor Anastasius, besieged on all fronts, refused to pay off Persia. Kavad invaded Iberia after Vakhtang refused to join him. Vakhtang sent his family to safety in the upper Kura, and his armies to Ujarma and Mtskheta. The Persians torched Iberia's eastern provinces. At some point (502 or 522), a major battle took place at Ujarma. Vakhtang pushed back the Persians to Rustavi, rode into the Persian camp and personally killed the shah's son Bartam, but he himself died of his wounds in Ujarma castle. Vakhtang's death revitalized the Persians, who took Tbilisi and Mtskheta. In the 520s, we find Byzantium and Persia agreeing to a truce and the restoration of former boundaries, while by 518 Tbilisi was governed by a Persian *marzpan* (a district chief, usually a native of the area he governed). Tbilisi's *marzpan* was a convert to Christianity (and very soon a martyr), Piran Gushnasp of the Mihran family. Possibly the shadowy King Gourgenes of the early sixth century was (if not Vakhtang by another name) a dispossessed ruler, even a Byzantine puppet: Procopius states that he took refuge in Lazica, and that the men of his family, named as Peranius, Pacurius (in Georgian Bakur) and Phazas served in the Byzantine army. (Proof of the dispersal of the Kartli's power centre is the sudden appearance in the upper Kura valley of stone crosses and Christian stelae.[11])

Ultimately Vakhtang failed, but his near-success in unifying Georgia set a benchmark for his successors, as well as feeding folklore and legend. He left little trace outside the Caucasus: a fresco portrait in the monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem was whitewashed after the eighteenth century, and a cameo (no longer traceable) attributed to the British Museum inscribed 'v-r-tangi' (Persian: 'varan-khosrv-tang') may be his only surviving likeness.[12]

While Vakhtang-Gorgasali fought wars of independence and expansion, Lazica / Egrisi appears to have had sixty largely peaceful years (despite the loss of its borderland, Argveti, to Kartli, and a Persian invasion in 468). But in 520 Persia instigated a series of wars on land and by sea against Byzantium, and now Lazica was the battlefield. Laz kings vacillated between the two empires, hoping for less brutality and less taxation

at the hands of the other. Lazica itself disintegrated. In Sebastopolis (Sukhumi), with Byzantine support, a hereditary principality arose in the early sixth century, under an *archos* (provincial governor) named Anos (probably an Abkhaz of the Anchba family); the Svans, too, pursued their own policies. By 542, in Pitsunda, Byzantium converted the Abkhaz (Abazgians and Apshils) to Christianity; overseen by an imperial eunuch, Euphrates, they abjured circumcision and slave trading. Sebastopolis and Pitsunda became the core of a new Abkhazia that eventually took over a war-torn Lazica.

Around 520 King Tsate I of Lazica sought investiture not from Byzantium, but from Shah Kavad, and renounced Christianity. Before war broke out, Seos, the Persian ambassador to Constantinople, declared that Lazica was historically a Persian vassal. In 523 Tsate was summoned to Constantinople, where he retracted his Persian allegiance and reverted to Christianity. Fortunately for him, Kartli had risen up and blocked Persian forces from Lazica: Kavad could only protest to Byzantium. Only in 528 did Persian forces cross Kartli and take Lazica's border fortresses of Shorapani and Skanda. Emperor Justinian (527–65) responded energetically: a Byzantine army invaded Lazica. Four years later, an equally powerful shah, Khosro Anushirvan (531–79), acceded. Their long reigns and iron determination to expand their respective empires inflicted on both Lazica and Kartli a protracted war, although in 532 the Persians briefly acknowledged Lazica's place in the Byzantine sphere of influence. In that treaty, the Persians allowed Kartlian citizens who had fled to Lazica in the war ten years before to return home; but the Byzantines did not mention Kartli as a kingdom in the treaty, so that Persia's abolition of Kartli's independence was conceded, at least tacitly.

In 532 Byzantium garrisoned Lazica's cities, fortified the capital Tsikheguji and established their headquarters in a new fortress, Petra (still unlocated), evidently disregarding the local population. The Byzantine *strategos* was a notorious embezzler; his replacement, Ioannos Tzibe, was worse, personally monopolizing local trade. King Gobaz II and his nobles, impoverished and disempowered by Tzibe, sent envoys to Shah Khosro and offered the Persians access to the sea if they liberated Lazica from Byzantium.

In 542 Khosro invaded Lazica and was greeted by Gobaz II: a twenty-year war (with brief truces) between Byzantium and Persia now began. The Persians and Laz killed *strategos* Tzibe and captured Petra, where Khosro left a Persian garrison, before rushing back to counter a Byzantine invasion led by the formidable Belisarius. Very soon Gobaz and his people regretted their new alliance. The Persians brought many Zoroastrian magi: both religious and economic oppression began. Lazicans also feared that Khosro planned to kill Gobaz and populate Lazica with settlers from the east. In

548 Persian assassins were sent to kill Gobaz, but Gobaz was tipped off by one of his nobles, Parsman. Gobaz now despatched envoys to Justinian, apologizing for his apostasy and begging for help. He received 7,000 Byzantines led by Digaesthos and 1,000 Mingrelians (Tzanoi) mercenaries, thus reviving Byzantine–Persian hostilities. Gobaz and the Byzantines failed to retake Petra, and now faced 30,000 men under the Persian general Mihr-Mihroe (known to the Greeks as Mermeroes). Digaesthos was outmanoeuvred; although Gobaz held onto central Lazica, and most Persian forces went to fight in Armenia, 5,000 Persian soldiers massacred the Byzantines. In 550 another Persian army under Khorian entered Lazica: the general and his army were destroyed on the Tskhenistsqali river in southern Lazica.

Despite victory, Lazica was in turmoil. Justinian replaced Digaesthos with another general, Bessas; Gobaz and Bessas then faced revolts led first by Svans, then by Abkhaz. The Abkhaz resented losing their autonomy to Byzantine military rulers. The Svan leader Separna even sought the shah's protection, while the Abazgian Opsite, after losing to the Byzantines, fled with a few survivors across the Caucasus to take refuge with the Huns. Until the seventh century Abkhazia was dust and ashes, its *archoi* appointed by Byzantium. The Apshils, angered by an Iranian general's attempt to rape their garrison commander, made peace with King Gobaz and the Byzantines. A second Svan rebellion erupted in 555–6, when the Byzantine general Soterichos crossed Svanetia carrying subsidies for Byzantium's Ossetian allies; Svan envoys, suspecting that Soterichos was handing their border fortress to the Ossetians, blocked his path. Soterichos had the envoys caned; the furious Svans slaughtered Soterichos, his two children and his entourage, confiscated the Ossetians' money and tried to induce the Persians (now retreating to Persia) to join them. Byzantium avenged the insult, but Lazica underwent further disintegration.

In the war against Persia, the Byzantines recaptured Petra, but razed it to the ground, lest it fall again to the enemy. Indeed, in autumn 551 Mermeroes returned, besieging first Archaeopolis (where he was repelled) and then Mukhuri near Kutaisi, where he dug in, thus cutting off the north of Lazica and starving its southern forts. Effectively, the Iranians had captured all northeastern Lazica. Under the 552 treaty, Byzantium acknowledged Persian supremacy over Lazica.

In 553 Mermeroes took more territory. Gobaz complained to Justinian of poor Byzantine leadership. Bessas was recalled, but two other Byzantine generals, Martinus and Rusticus, told Justinian that Gobaz was talking to the Persians again. Justinian ordered Martinus and Rusticus to bring Gobaz to Constantinople, if necessary by force. In 554 Gobaz was invited to Hopa on the Black Sea, arrested and killed.

The Laz and Mingrelian aristocracy were infuriated by this murder: according to Agathias Scholasticus, they held a council in which a certain Æëtes recommended siding with Persia, but a Phartazes (Partadze) advised seeking justice from Justinian.[13] Partadze won the vote, and messengers came to Justinian asking him to punish Martinus and Rusticus and recognize Gobaz II's brother Tsate II (then in Constantinople) as king of Lazica. Athanasius, a Byzantine senator, imprisoned Martinus, Rusticus and Rusticus' brother Ioannus; their trial for regicide was postponed when in 555 a Persian army invaded Lazica, reaching the sea at Phasis (Poti). In 556 this army was routed and withdrew to Kartli; the defeated general, Nakhoragan, was flayed alive by Shah Khosro.

After this decisive victory, Justinian could hold a show trial in Lazica and have two generals (who had only obeyed his orders) publicly beheaded (Martinus was spared). To placate Tsate II, Justinian gave him a prestigious present, building him a miniature St Sophia in his capital Archaeopolis-Nokalakevi. Khosro realized that war in Lazica, with open seas to the west, and thickly forested mountains to the east, favoured the Byzantines, and further defeats would imperil his throne. A truce was declared in 557, and by 562, under the 50-year Treaty of Darash, Khosro accepted Byzantine suzerainty over Lazica for annual payments in compensation (Persia maintaining its claim to Svanetia nevertheless). The treaty abolished the kingdom of Lazica, now a Byzantine territory, power moving north from Phasis and west from Rhodopolis to Sebastopolis and Pityus. Kings of Lazica became mere *patrikioi*, or patricians; Laz and Mingrelian troops were absorbed into the Byzantine army. Only the Arab invasion a century later would free Lazica from Byzantium.

The Treaty of Darash lasted only nine years. In 571 Emperor Justin I profited from turmoil in Persia and a rebellion by Armenia and Kartli; the Byzantines, supported by Lazica, Abkhazia and Ossetia, drove the Persians out of Svanetia in 575.

What Byzantium achieved in western Georgia, the Iranians longed to do in eastern Georgia, ever since Gourgenes fled Kartli to Lazica. They abolished Iberian kingship by 570. The three Caucasian kingdoms, Kartli, Armenia and Caucasian Albania, now formed part of the kustak (northern region) of Atrapatakan, divided into ten 'shahr', each under the rule of a *marzpan*, who oversaw garrison commanders of every fortified city. But Georgian chronicles record at least five kings in the sixth century, perhaps up to 580, after the death of Vakhtang Gorgasali (or his successor Gourgenes) in 522. Their reigns were ineffectual, perhaps nominal, for Sassanid control of Iberia during the wars with Justinian was exercised through Persian *marzpans*: in the 540s the *marzpan* of Kartli was Ervand Gushnasp, perhaps the son of the martyred *marzpan*, to whom the author

of *The Martyrdom of Evstati* attributes absolute power over Iberia; by the 550s the *marzpan* was Vezhan Buzmir. The hagiographies of the period imply that 'kings' in Tbilisi had only the status of *mamasakhlisi*, meaning 'head of the (royal) house'.

The chronicles have Dachi, Vakhtang's son by Balendukht, acceding in 522, in his old age, and reigning for twelve years. He is credited with completing Tbilisi's fortifications, but, significantly, he resided at Ujarma on the Kakhetian border, working as a missionary to the highlanders. Dachi's half-brothers by Vakhtang's second wife, Leon and Mihrdat, went southwest as dukes of Klarjeti and Javakheti; Klarjeti was under Byzantine influence: from here the Georgian kingdom would resurge.

Dachi was succeeded in 534 by his son Bakur II, who reigned until 557. The Byzantine chronicler, John Malalas, records a Georgian king coming in 535 to Constantinople with his entourage to cement an alliance with Justinian: Malalas calls him Samanazus, maybe rendering Dzma Dachisa, 'Dachi's brother', i.e. Mihrdat or Leon. Juansher says that Bakur II had no adult heir; other chroniclers have Bakur II's son, Parsman V, ruling Kartli from 547 to 561, followed by his nephew Parsman VI, and then by the latter's son Bakur III, who died in 580. Bakur III's remit barely extended beyond his palace at Ujarma: total Sassanid control of Kartli after his death was a *de jure* continuation of de facto abolition of Iberian kingship since the 520s. Dukes of royal blood still ruled outlying provinces, whenever Persian interests were not at stake, or Persian governors found the populace ungovernable. These dukes provided a pool for future rulers of a Georgian kingdom, but they also bequeathed to Georgia an intractable problem: feudal lords with no fealty to the centre, treating their fiefs as miniature hereditary kingdoms.

Byzantium rescued the Iberian kingdom: Iberia's nobles apparently appealed to Emperor Maurice to nominate a king and dukes from among the king's relatives. In 588 Gurgen (Guaram to the chroniclers), possibly the son of Leo of Klarjeti (the younger son of Vakhtang Gorgasali), more probably the son of a daughter of Vakhtang and of unstated paternity was nominated. The chronicler Sumbat Davitisdze legitimizes Gurgen / Guaram posthumously, alleging his father to be a Bagratid of Armenian-Jewish origin. Gurgen took the title of *kouropalates*, one rank below 'caesar' and 'nobilissimus', although its literal meaning is 'majordomo, or household chief'. Since 572, Gurgen had sheltered in Constantinople, after supporting the Armenian prince Mamikonian in an uprising against the Persians. Despite Justin II's support, and the murder of Suren, the *marzpan* in Armenia's capital Dvin, the uprising failed. But by 589 Persia lost Kartli: a warlord Bahram Chobin overthrew and blinded Shah Hormizd IV, then expelled Hormizd's son Khosro II, who took refuge in Constantinople, asking Emperor Maurice to help regain his throne. The price for this help

was restoring a Georgian king, or *kouropalates*, in Kartli. Gurgen settled at Mtskheta (where he founded Jvari monastery), 20 miles from the *marzpan* in Tbilisi. In his short but secure reign, Gurgen was the first Kartlian ruler to mint coins (Sassanid silver drachmas overstruck with the initials GN).[14]

A *kouropalates* found it harder than a king to enforce power: after two generations Kartli's dukes, as landowners invested by the shah or the emperor, not as appointees of a Georgian king, were insubordinate. Gurgen's son and successor, Stepanoz I, dared only call himself grand duke, i.e. first among equals, not king.

To judge by one silver coin inscribed JO, another grand-duke, Juansher, ruled briefly before Stepanoz I took the throne in 591, when Byzantium and Persia were at peace. Stepanoz I is less shadowy than his predecessors: he is portrayed on silver coins of his first decade, and in stone at Jvari monastery (which he completed) as *patrikios* of Kartli. His coins are the first to bear a cross instead of the Zoroastrians' sacred flame. Despite this Christian gesture, Juansher denounces him as 'an unbeliever unafraid of God'. Possibly he was a monophysite and collaborated with Persia (which tolerated monophysite Christianity); certainly, he repossessed royal lands granted to Mghvime monastery. Stepanoz I was succeeded in 604 or 605 by his relative Adarnase I, represented on the wall of Jvari monastery as *hypatos* (literally 'supreme ruler', but in practice 'consul') with Stepanoz. (Juansher prolongs Stepanoz's reign to 627, when Emperor Heraclius captures him and flays him alive in Tbilisi.) Adarnarse had to counter Persian pressure on Kartli: in 604 Persia began a new war against Byzantium (weakened by internal dissent and by Avar attacks). A pro-Persian *vitaxa* ruled in Tbilisi; Adarnarse had to move up country.

Catholicos Kvirion II (r. 595–610), after writing to Pope Gregory I to clarify doctrinal points, defiantly declared Kartli as dyophysite Christian, that is professing Christ's dual nature, divine and human.[15] This was one of the most fateful decisions ever taken in Kartli: it permanently split Kartli from its former ally, Armenia. Armenia had chosen monophysitism (which acknowledges solely Christ's divine nature) in order to remain Christian and at peace with Persia. Dyophysitism, and thus adhesion to the Council of Chalcedon, was in 608 a declaration of alliance with Byzantium. Until 604 the rift between monophysites and dyophysites in Byzantium had caused no dissension in the Caucasus. A council of Caucasian Churches in the Armenian ecclesiastic capital of Dvin in 506 accepted Emperor Zeno's tolerant *Henotikon*. In 525 Procopius called the Iberians the most orthodox dyophysites in the Persian empire; in 551 the Armenian Church voted for monophysitism, and began converting Caucasian Albanians from dyophysitism (leading to the extinction of the Caucasian Albanian written language, for their scriptures were dyophysite, heretical to Armenians,

stressing Christ's full incarnation, not reducing his humanity to mere 'clothing in human form': Caucasian Albanians henceforth heard Mass in Armenian). The Armenians found Catholicos Kvirion II's declaration especially offensive because he had until 599 been an Armenian bishop. Mose, Armenian bishop of Tsurtavi (a mixed Georgian and Armenian diocese), fled to Armenia in 605: a polemical correspondence in Armenian followed. In 608 Catholicos Abraham of Armenia forbade any relationship, outside commerce, with Iberians or Caucasian Albanians. The Georgian catholicos Kvirion was branded a 'liar and traitor'; Georgians were accused of killing 'like a wolf' a bishop Petre who argued against a breach with the Armenians.[16] Conversely, Armenian dyophysites fled to Georgia and founded churches there. The Persian Church in Ctesiphon then banned dyophysitism; more dyophysites fled to Kartli. The breach became final by 700, under the Armenian patriarch Sahak III, when Arab victories over Byzantium encouraged monophysites.

Persia's response in 614 to Adarnarse's and Kvirion's dyophysite declaration was to drive Patriarch Kvirion out of Kartli; Adarnase's writ no longer ran in Tbilisi, nor could he mint coins. Only Emperor Heraclius's energetic rebuff in 622 of Persia's devastating attacks (which reached the suburbs of Constantinople) restored Adarnase to power (albeit disputed by feudal lords) and dyophysitism to Kartli. In 626 Heraclius invaded Iberia with troops of Khazars from the Russian steppes. Tbilisi was then garrisoned by 1,000 men, Iranians and monophysite Georgians; the garrison held out for two years, mocking Heraclius as a 'bearded goat' and the Khazar general as an 'ugly pumpkin'. Heraclius let the Khazars deal with the garrison: when it surrendered, they flayed the commander alive, looted Tbilisi, and rivers of blood flowed through the city. In 626 Shah Khosro II was murdered by his son, and Persia capitulated. Byzantium now controlled both Lazica and Iberia as vassal states under *patrikioi* (the title 'king', or *basileos*, was conceded by Byzantium only to the Shah of Persia, Charlemagne, and the king of the Bulgarians). In a sense, Heraclius had united Georgia.

Around 570, when Tsate II died, power in Lazica passed to the *patrikioi* of Abkhazia, who founded a virtual hereditary kingship (acknowledged as such in the eighth century): after 640, their names were Greek (Demetrius, Theodosius, Constantine), but they were scions of the Abkhaz Anchba family; their authority was far-reaching, for all of former Colchis-Lazica-Egrisi became known as Abkhazia (Old Georgian: *Apkhazeti*). While Byzantium and Persia were at war in the seventh century, Abkhazia largely escaped conflict, although the burden of transient Byzantine and Khazar troops must have exceeded the economic stimulus they provided.

In Kartli Adarnase was succeeded in 642 by his son Stepanoz II (represented as a boy in two carvings on the wall of Jvari monastery). He is

praised by the chronicler as the 'most pious of all Kartli's kings, of pure faith, and a builder of churches'. (The stone plaque of Adarnase, Stepanoz and the latter's uncle Demetre at Jvari, however, mingles Christian and local traditions: Stepanoz II is dressed Sassanid-style, wearing a Turkic metal-studded belt, while Demetre wears Parthian gown, Caucasian boots and a Caucasian highlander's felt cloak.[17])

Stepanoz II minted coins whose reverse bears a cross on an altar; he was the last Iberian king for three centuries to mint coinage. Peace and unity under Byzantine protection suddenly ended when the Arabs brought Islam north, killed Shah Yezdigerd III of Persia in 651 and began raiding Transcaucasia. In his last years, Stepanoz II had to recognize an Arab caliph's suzerainty.

4
The Arab Conquest

✠

The speed of Arab conquest, less than a generation after the Prophet's death, and their invincible cavalry stunned Byzantines and Persians. Kartli's first Arab conqueror, Habib ibn Maslama, came first in 643 to reconnoitre and loot. In 654–5 he returned to conquer Kartli, meeting fierce Byzantine resistance. Defeated in Armenia, the Byzantine general Maurianos made a stand in Kartli, leaving Kartli's ruler to choose annihilation or surrender. Stepanoz II died in 650; his son Adarnase II was initially a vassal of the Arab caliphate in Baghdad. (*The Life of Georgia*, however, dates Stepanoz's death to 663, naming Adarnase II merely as duke of Kakhetia, and Stepanoz II's sons Mihr, 663–8, and Archil, 668–718, who succeeded Adarnase, as patrikioi of Kartli.) Kartli's ruler understood that the Arabs treated submissive states generously and resistance ruthlessly (as in Armenia and Caucasian Albania): envoys to Habib ibn Maslama offered surrender, asking for vassal status. Habib visited Tbilisi, agreed *jizia*, a tax on Christians of one denarius annually per household, and guaranteed the inviolability of Church and *patrikios* (Arabic: *batrik*). The Arabs tolerated Christianity: Islam was voluntary, for Christians paid *jizia*; the Caliphate insisted only that its officials remain Muslim. In return for capping *jizia*, Kartli's *batrik* agreed not to aggregate households (which reduced taxation), to supply labour and materials (and even soldiers) for Arab wars, to pay lodging and water-mill taxes, and to house and feed visiting Muslims. Habib's 'defence seal' to Kartli (which the Arabs called Jurzan) undertook: 'if you are attacked and forced to submit [to another power], we cannot help you, but we shall not consider you wrongdoers or hold you responsible.'

The *batrik* of Kartli could rule as he wanted. But his powers were restricted to Kartli proper, for he now faced *sauve-qui-peut* Georgian nobles, each ruling their own fief and making their own terms with the Arabs. The Arabs preferred a fragmented Caucasus. Habib ibn Maslama had separate agreements with the dukes of Klarjeti, Trialeti, Kakhetia and the

highlanders, who paid poll tax and land tax. Some eastern duchies, like Kakhetia, supplied goods in lieu of tax.

The Arab conquest was undermined, however, between 656 and 661 by civil war in Baghdad: Muawiyah and his Ummayad dynasty seized the Caliphate. Adarnase II apparently exploited the chaos by rebelling with the Armenians and Caucasian Albanians against Arab taxation, discreetly in the 660s, and violently in 681–2. For three years Kartlians held the Arabs at bay. Byzantines and Khazars, however, thinking the Arabs vulnerable, invaded Kartli from the west and the north. The Khazars were looters and slave-traders: Adarnase II probably died fighting them in 684 or 685, and the Arabs chose Guaram II, then duke of Klarjeti and Javakheti, to replace him. (The chronicles are inconsistent: *The Life of Georgia* states that when Mihr died in 668, his brother Archil ruled Lazica, but returned to rule Kakhetia.)

The Byzantines regained the upper hand: in 686 the Caliphate agreed to a truce, sharing taxation from Kartli between Byzantium and Baghdad. Two years later, Justinian II and the Khazars resumed war on the Caliphate by invading Kartli; Guaram II deserted the Arabs and won Byzantine recognition as *kouropalates* of Kartli.

Once Caliph Abd al Maliki came to the throne, however, the Arabs recouped all their losses. Guaram II died around 693, when Arab forces, now allied to the Khazars, retook Transcaucasia. Guaram III (son or grandson of Guaram II) became *kouropalates*, but ruled only in name in central Kartli: by 704 the Arabs were so established in Tbilisi that they minted coins, a sequence of dirhams that continued until the tenth century.

In this second Arab conquest, Georgia was again briefly united: in 697 a ruler of Lazica, Sergi Barnukisdze, rebelled against Byzantium and invited Arab support. Between 707 and 711 the Arabs seized all Lazica, except its ports and western Svanetia. They destroyed Kutaisi and Tsikheguji, but apart from briefly occupying Anakopia, north of Sukhumi, they never held the coast, or Abkhazia.[1] Lazica suffered aftershocks: a contingent of Armenian captives, released from Mesopotamia, on their way to Constantinople, ravaged Poti.[2] Nevertheless, Lazica was held by its Byzantium-approved *arkhoi*, Constantine I, and later his son Theodor. The Byzantines avenged the Arab conquest of Lazica by sending hordes of their new allies, the Ossetians, eastwards over the mountains.

Kartli faced successive Arab punitive expeditions until the 730s. Guaram III probably remained a nominal *kouropalates* until his death in 748, while Archil (named by Juansher in *The Life of Georgia*), who married a descendant of Vakhtang Gorgasali's daughter, and was martyred by an Arab general, was, despite his claims, only duke of Kakhetia. Martyrdom (and canonization) is the only certain fact about Archil. Some historians date his martyrdom to 786, a time of heightened Arab ruthlessness when

St Abo and possibly King Stepanoz III were executed, and blame Khuzayma ibn Khazim: Archil was allegedly killed for refusing to reveal Emperor Heraclius' treasure. Archil is also recorded as fleeing to Lazica in 736 to help the Abkhaz ruler Leo I defend Anakopia from the Arabs. The Orthodox Church plausibly dates Archil's martyrdom to 744, as Murvan the Deaf's last atrocity before leaving to become caliph of Baghdad. (Perhaps chroniclers confuse different Archils: certainly, Vakhushti's date of 718 makes it impossible, and the Church's date of 744 makes it improbable for Archil to be the father-in-law of King Ashot the Great of Tao-Klarjeti, who certainly ruled between 813 and 830.)

In the 720s Transcaucasia was a battlefield where the Arabs fought Khazars, rather than Armenians or Iberians. In 724 General Al-Jarah ibn Abdullah al-Hakim renewed Habib ibn Maslama's terms for the Iberians: clearly, the Arabs wanted only tax income, now turning the *jizia* into a poll tax on every male non-Muslim between 15 and 59, adding land and cattle taxes, since Kartli no longer enjoyed the concessions of a voluntary vassal. In 725 the caliph sent his bastard son Maslama ibn al-Malik to subdue the Caucasus once and for all. The Khazars were driven back north, and their khan's heir killed. In this campaign (which ended with the paranoiac caliph shackling his own victorious general and sending him to the Khazars) the Iberians were treated as hostile. In 733 Maslama left for Damascus, and was replaced by his nephew and fellow-commander Marwan ibn Mohammed. Marwan became known in Kartli as Murvan the Deaf for ruthlessly suppressing all opposition in Transcaucasia.

Murvan intensified the Arab occupation. In 735 he brought into Kartli an army so intimidating that the Khazar khan converted to Islam and joined Murvan. The campaign crippled the demography of Kartli, and most of Georgia was changed: 'people were forced to flee all over the Caucasus and hid in the forests and ravines,' the chronicler relates. The passes over the Caucasus were barred, and towns razed to the ground; eastern Georgia suffered most. Murvan ethnically cleansed Kakhetia, settling there 20,000 Slav households (presumably Khazar allies). But the Slavs killed their own leader and fled, only for Murvan to round them up and slaughter them.

Centuries would pass before the cities and towns that Murvan the Deaf burned down could be restored. Refugees moved up the river Kura and then west into the mountains of Klarjeti, where there were no Arabs. Guaram III (Mihr or Archil in other versions) saw that resistance was pointless, and fled south-west with his people. According to Juansher, Murvan pursued the fleeing *batrik* into Lazica and caused the same destruction there as in Kartli. In the borderland of Argveti Murvan put down fierce resistance from the local dukes Davit and Konstantin, who were executed near Kutaisi for refusing to accept Islam. In this campaign,

according to *The Life of Georgia*, the Arabs reached Abkhazia but were repelled at Anakopia, partly by its defenders and partly by an outbreak of dysentery. King Mihr is said to have died at Anakopia.

Certainly, by 736 the chronicler rightly says that 'the lands of Kartli, Armenia and Caucasian Albania were ravaged and there were no buildings anywhere, nor food for human beings nor fodder for cattle.' Murvan departed first to ravage the north Caucasus and then, in 744, to seize the Caliphate: this stopped the slaughter in Georgia, but left it anarchic. Murvan put Tbilisi under an emir; the emir, answering directly to Baghdad, not to the wali in Dvin (Armenia), would make Tbilisi Muslim, the northern outpost of the Caliphate, and finance its transformation by extorting taxes from Kartli's sparse population (the Arabs decided not to occupy Lazica). Georgia's centre was now an Arab emirate (at first including towns like Rustavi and Manglisi, and extending to the borders of Armenia), while Kartli proper had migrated upriver to Tao-Klarjeti.

The chronicles have Archil returning to Iberia around 756, twelve years after Murvan the Deaf left the country, to remake his kingdom, now under Abbasid Arab hegemony, by marrying his nieces (Mihr's daughters) to the feudal dukes before letting them rule their dukedoms autonomously, thus assuring the kingdom's future by kinship ties. Using kinship and feudal decentralization was probably a real policy, whether Archil was then still alive or not; and Kartli's nominal chief noble between 748 and 760, coexisting with the emir of Tbilisi, was Adarnase III, father-in-law of Guaram III's son. Adarnase III's existence is proven by his Byzantine title of *kouropalates*. From the 760s, as Kartli recovered from Murvan the Deaf's devastation, resistance to Arab rule hardened. Adarnase III's son Nerse angered Caliph al-Mansur, who in 772 imprisoned him in Baghdad for three years. Nerse was released by Caliph al-Mahdi, but four or five years later the Arabs expelled him from Iberia; he sought asylum first with the Khazars, then with Leo II of Abkhazia, where his family had fled. The caliph had Nerse's royal title transferred to his nephew Stepanoz III, before letting Nerse retire to live in Iberia. In 786 Nerse had to endure the martyrdom of his close assistant, Abo, an Arab who had converted to Christianity (inspiring a fine hagiography); that same year the Arab viceroy Khuzayma bin Khazim executed Stepanoz III, too: no more was heard of Guaram's descendants.

In the century between Murvan the Deaf's departure and the punitive Arab expedition against Iberia by Bugha al-Kabir al-Sharabi ('the Turk') in 853, few events are reliably recorded in Iberia. A major shift had, nevertheless, occurred. The Caliphate was weakened by Baghdad's destruction in 813. Politically, Kartli had retreated southwest to Tao-Klarjeti, where a new dynasty, the Bagratids, was expanding.[3] The Tbilisi emirate was now a Muslim trading centre, second in the Caucasus only to Derbent,

and the emirs, spending taxes they no longer transferred to Baghdad, protected from the Caliphate by surrounding Christian states, asserted their independence. Bugha the Turk brought 50,000 men not only to suppress Armenian and Iberian Christians, but also to incinerate Tbilisi's pinewood houses and kill its fractious Emir Is'hak bin Ismail bin Shuab (and some 40,000 citizens). There was a show of Kartvelian unity, for the king of Abkhazia-Lazica Teodosi II (or, if he died in 837, his successor Demetre II), together with a Kakhetian duke, Kostanti-Kakha, fought Bugha. The Georgians and the emir were defeated with terrible loss of life. But Bugha lost later battles to Kakhetian forces and left Iberia to ravage Caucasian Albania: his campaigns took him from Dvin in Armenia up the river Kura to the Likhi Pass leading from Kartli to Lazica, and up the Aragvi valley to the foot of the Daryal Pass, but no further. Arab control was never again fully asserted in Georgia, but the country was again depopulated and ruined.

Civil war in Baghdad and the retreat of Iberian power from central Kartli fragmented both Kartli and Kakhetia. Kakhetia now extended from the Daryal Pass, which it had retaken from the Arabs, to Caucasian Albania. Centuries of war between Byzantium and Persia, then between Khazars and Arabs, affected Kakhetia less than Kartli: towns, fields and vineyards were relatively intact. King Archil, states Juansher, even built a capital at Tsuketi, high up near Ossetia, and fortresses on the upper Iori, less accessible to invaders than citadels like Ujarma in the lower valley. From the 770s, Kakhetia was effectively independent (the Arabs called Kakhetia 'Sanaria', after the Tsanars, a clan dominating highland Kakhetia, while 'Jurzan' was the Arab name for Kartli and for all Georgia). The Tsanars refused to pay *jizia*; rebellion spread into the lowlands, and in 770 Hussein ibn-Kahtaba, the *wali* in Armenia, tried to reassert authority. Hussein's forces were defeated; another 20,000 Arabs pacified the Tsanars, who lost some 16,000 men. Eventually, the Tsanars paid taxes in their renowned horses and sheep.[4] But an intransigent Kakhetia controlled the Daryal Pass trade route. Under Tsanar domination, in mountains too high for Arab punitive detachments, Kakhetia became a chorepiscopate, a bishopric-cum-duchy, ruled by a duke and chorepiscopos, or rural bishop, with one member of the feudal nobility combining both roles. The Bagratid historian Vakhushti, writing in the 1750s, using sources now lost, names the first duke of Kakhetia as Juansher, followed in 787 by Grigol. Grigol held power until 827: hoping to rule all Georgia, he attacked Ashot, *kouropalates* of Tao–Klarjeti, and King Teodosi II of Egrisi-Abkhazia. This internecine warfare petered out in 827: Grigol was succeeded by Vache (or Dachi according to chronicles), and during 829–30 an invasion under Khalid bin Yazid reconciled the factions. Khalid bin Yazid returned in the early 840s to attack Dachi's successor Samoel (839–61). In 842 Kakhetia

and the emir of Tbilisi, Is'hak ibn-Ismail, pushed first Khalid bin Yazid, then his son Mahmed bin Khalid, back into Caucasian Albania

In 853, however, Bugha the Turk invaded, killing the emir of Tbilisi, but could not reach the Tsanars' lair, lost battles to the Kakhetians, and retreated. Sensing Arab exhaustion, feudal families from southern Kakhetia (then known as Kukheti), bordering the emirate, ousted the Tsanars. Kakhetia expanded at the expense of its eastern neighbour, Duke or King Grigol Hamam of Hereti. Now, especially under chorepiscopos Padla (r. 881–93), Kakhetia befriended the emirate of Tbilisi: they both rejected the caliphate's authority. After 881 a new Kakhetian dynasty, the Arevmanelis, under chorepiscopoi Kvirike I (893–918), Padla II (r. 918–29) and Kvirike II (926–76), acquired, in alliance, or at war with Abkhazia–Egrisi, parts of Hereti and of Kartli outside the emirate. This policy sometimes faltered: in 959 Kvirike II's brother Shurta betrayed Ujarma to Giorgi II of Abkhazia: only the accession of Leo III of Abkhazia enabled the alliance to go on its plundering Kartli's citadels.

Hereti, the extreme eastern province of Iberia, and the first to suffer Arab domination, was especially fragile. A mix of Caucasian Albanians, various Dagestani peoples, Armenians, Persians as well as Georgians, it had prosperous towns, trading with Persia and Armenia; it was also obstinately monophysite. Hereti tried to assert its autonomy in the early ninth century. Its first recorded ruler, Sahil ibn Sumbat (r. 815–40), slaughtered the Caucasian Albanian royal family in 822 and declared himself shah of Arran (as Caucasian Albania was called), currying favour with the Caliphate by betraying the Zoroastrian heretic Babak Khorramdin (for which Sahil was awarded a crown, a royal robe and a horse). Sahil later incurred Arab distrust, was arrested and sent to Baghdad; he was succeeded by his son Adarnase I (r. 840–65) and grandson, Grigol Hamam (r. 865–93). Under Hamam's successor Adarnase II (897–943), who sported the Byzantine title of *patrikios*, the kingdom survived Kakhetian attacks, but lost Caucasian Albania to its Persian-Azeri Salarid neighbours.[5] Grigol Hamam married Dinar, daughter of Adarnase Bagration of Tao-Klarjeti: she made Hereti renounce monophysitism and rejoin the Georgian Church. After Grigol's death, Dinar ruled with her son Ishkhanik, and dyophysitism was maintained. Grigol's and Dinar's grandson, King Ioane Senekerim (*c.* 965–95), was crowned by the monophysite archbishop of Caucasian Albania, but blessed by the dyophysite Davit III, king of Tao, and by the Muslim Salarid Azeri Khan. Under the ecumenical Ioane Senekerim, Hereti fended off its Kakhetian and Muslim neighbours and regained parts of Caucasian Albania and Kakhetia in the 950s, before surrendering first to dyophysite bishops, and then to Kakhetian and Abkhaz–Egrisi rulers in the early eleventh century.

At the end of the ninth century, a new Persian emirate (based in present-day Azerbaijan) under Muhammad ibn Abi'l Saj and his Sajid suc-

cessors threatened eastern Georgia. The Sajids invaded repeatedly between 908 and 914 on behalf of the Caliphate. Yusuf ibn Abi'l Saj (Abul Qasim abu Saj to Georgians) expelled the ruler of Armenia to Abkhazia–Egrisi; he invaded Tbilisi, but made peace with Emir Jaffar I bin Ali. The Sajids then invaded Kakhetia and razed Ujarma, until the chorepiscopos Kvirike negotiated a truce which saved Kakhetia. The invaders then moved on Kartli, then defended by Kostanti III (899–915) of Abkhazia–Egrisi: Kostanti demolished Uplistsikhe citadel to deny it to the Sajids. Abul Qasim then laid siege to fortresses in Tao-Klarjeti: he beheaded the defender of Qveli castle, the *aznauri* Mikael Gobron, who refused to convert to Islam. (Abul Qasim also executed Smbat, king of Armenia, in 914.) Abul Qasim aimed to reinstate Arab taxation and hegemony: like Bugha in 853, he failed, but his savagery caused destruction that took two generations to repair. Fortunately, the Sajids were soon in conflict with the Caliphate and, after a last invasion of Kakhetia around 937, sought peace in Transcaucasia.

By 1000, wars of fragmentation were superseded by wars of reintegration. Kakhetia's chorepiscopos Kvirike, allied to Kostanti, king of Abkhazia (as Lazica–Egrisi was now called), made Adarnase *patrikios* surrender territory to both invaders, a process stopped only by Saj threats from Azerbaijan. Conflicts between feudal families in Kakhetia led the southerners (from Gardabani) to ask the Abkhaz king Giorgi II (915–60), for help: he sent his son, the future Leo III (r. 960–69, then duke of Kartli), to suborn Kvirike II's brother Shurta and extort from Kakhetia its capital Ujarma, its key fortresses, and cede, despite resistance from Kartli's nobles, the whole province to Giorgi II. Leo could not retain his father's conquests, fell ill and died; in the late 950s Kakhetia was invaded by Ioane Senekerim of Hereti, who made himself king of the Tsanars (thus reuniting Hereti and Kakhetia). The Kakhetian chorepiscopos Demetre retaliated by fomenting a fratricidal rebellion against Leo III's successor Demetre III (r. 969–75) by his brother Teodosi III (r. 975–8). The ensuing anarchy enabled Kakhetians to invade Kartli. They were not entirely driven out of Kartli by its ruler Davit *kouropalates*, but after 1000 Queen Dinar of Hereti and chorepiscopos Kvirike of Kakhetia had no option but to join a united Georgia under King Bagrat III.

Georgian unification came from a resurgent dynasty based in Tao-Klarjeti, but it also depended on changes in Lazica-Egrisi, where centuries of devastating war, and Byzantium's search for an ally against eastern invaders, had shifted the political centre to Abkhazia. Here, by 800, spared the worst ravages, the Anchba clan had progressed from Byzantine stooges to founding a royal dynasty. Leo I (736–77) achieved authority by halting the Arab advance on the Black Sea and over the Caucasus; Leo II (766–811) ruled almost all former Colchis, from the Çoruh to the Psou, after the death or senility of Archil's descendants Ioane and Juansher left the throne

of Egrisi vacant. Independent of both Arabs and Greeks, Leo II, a grandson of a Khazar king, and a cousin of the Byzantine emperor Leo IV, dared proclaim himself 'king' of the Abkhaz, Svans, Mingrelians and other Georgians, organizing his kingdom as eight duchies, with Shorapani in Argveti (on Kartli's border) and Kutaisi in Imeretia as chief cities. In 790 Leo II made Kutaisi his capital. But Byzantium refused to recognize Abkhaz kingship: Leo II's title, when sent a gold ring of investiture was *archon* or *exusiastos*, meaning 'governor'. His cognomen was 'brilliant', whereas the ruler of Greater Armenia was called 'most brilliant', and the *kouropalates* in Tao-Klarjeti 'most noble': Abkhazia ranked higher than north Caucasian states, but lower than other Transcaucasian countries.

Despite their Abkhaz origins, Abkhaz kings probably used Georgian as a state language: most of Abkhazia's citizens may have been Georgians then. But the Church was still subordinate to Constantinople, and Greek remained the ecclesiastical language. Leon II secured his northern and eastern frontiers by marrying his daughter to the Khazar khan, who now countered any Byzantine pressure. (This Abkhaz–Khazar alliance saved the life of Nerse, the Kartlian ruler forced out by the Arabs in the 770s.) On occasions, the Abkhaz participated with Armenians, Laz and Slavs in rebellions against Byzantium, for example that of Thomas the Slav in 821–3. In retaliation, the Byzantines sent a fleet to the Black Sea ports in 832, and twice in the 840s, which, though aimed at the Arabs, also reminded Abkhazia of its status within the Byzantine empire. These Byzantine expeditions failed; the empire had worse problems, such as iconoclasm and the Bulgarians, to solve, and gave up using force to influence events in Abkhazia.

Security and ethnic considerations made inland Kutaisi, rather than coastal Graeco-Abkhaz Sebastopolis-Sukhumi, Abkhazia-Egrisi's new capital. The Church too shifted eastwards: early in the tenth century the bishoprics of Lazica, Abkhazia and Jiketi (the Old Georgian name of Circassia) changed allegiance from Constantinople to the Iberian patriarch in Mtskheta (who already controlled the bishopric of Argveti). New bishoprics, like Chqondidi in Mingrelia, arose. Mtskheta used Georgian, not Greek, for the liturgy, which must have pleased parishioners. When King Ishkhanik and Queen Dinar of Hereti renounced monophysitism in 950, Georgia was unified ecclesiastically, making political union perhaps inevitable. A compelling definition of Georgia was introduced by the writer Giorgi Merchule ('ecclesiastical lawyer') in the ninth century: 'We can consider as Greater Georgia wherever Mass and prayers are said in Georgian'.

The Abkhaz kingdom was free of Arab invaders from the 750s, although the Byzantine emperor Theophilus and General Bardas suffered an Arab incursion in the 830s: the tenth-century Arab historian Mas'udi claimed that for a time the Abkhaz paid taxes to the Caliphate. In 853 the Abkhaz king Demetre II helped Kartli fight Bugha the Turk after the

execution of Tbilisi's emir Is'hak. When in 907 the Sajid Abul Qasim made war on Sumbat of Armenia, Abkhazia offered Smbat asylum and support to Kartli, which Abul Qasim had invaded. Shunning conflict, Abkhazia grew stronger while Abul Qasim wrought havoc in Kartli and Armenia.

From 825 to 1008, when Bagrat III became the first king of all Georgia, Abkhazia had a stable hereditary monarchy, some kings (e.g. Demetre II, 825–861, Giorgi II, 922–957) reigning for over thirty years. Occasionally a disinherited brother sought support from feudal rulers in Meskhi, on the kingdom's southern borders. But the Abkhaz kings were secure, and drove feudal magnates, like Liparit Baghvash of Argveti in the 880s, to seek greater freedom under Tao-Klarjeti's lighter yoke. Abkhazia's Black Sea ports, the Caucasus and the Likhi mountain passes were all well fortified against invasion. Byzantine and Arab coins circulated, testifying to the country's strong economy. The succession was rarely breached, when a brother instead of a son succeeded, or (in 868 or 878 on King Giorgi I Aghtsepeli's death) when Svans, Ioane and then his son Adarnase Shavliani seized the throne. (Adarnase Shavliani married a daughter of Guaram Bagration of Tao-Klarjeti and fought for his in-laws against Davit *kouro - palates* of Tao-Klarjeti.) The legitimate Abkhaz heir, Bagrat I (son of Demetre II), fled to Constantinople, but regained power with Byzantine help in 887, killed the usurper Adarnase and married the latter's widow. In the early tenth century, Giorgi II (922–57) exiled two of his five sons to Byzantium 'lest after my death there should be strife between them'. Of these sons, three (Leo III, Demetre III and Teodosi III), however, succeeded to the throne of Abkhazia (before it merged into a united Georgia in 978), while the fourth, Kostanti, was appointed to rule Kartli, as part of Giorgi II's policy of unifying Georgia by interdynastic marriages and intrigues. (Giorgi II's daughter Gurandukht, depicted next to her brother, Leon III, in a relief at Kumurdo church in Javakheti, would bear Bagrat III, the first all-Georgian king.) Kostanti proved too independent, however, and was overthrown by his own father. In the 960s, Abkhazia's influence grew even stronger, when a nominee of Giorgi II's son, Leo III, took over the duchy of Javakheti.

The southern fringes of Iberia, Tao-Klarjeti, Samtskhe and Javakheti, Kartli's refuge from the Arabs, were dominated by the Abkhaz kingdom, clearly set on controlling all Georgia. In the 880s Bagrat I helped his brother-in-law Nasri, a refugee in Constantinople, to conquer Odzrkhe and two other fortresses in Samtskhe. After Abul Qasim's invasion of 907, central Kartli was open to Abkhaz influence; as an ally in Kakhetia's campaigns against Hereti, Abkhazia won territory and access to Caucasian Albania and to the Ossetians (now Abkhazia's allies) over the Daryal Pass. In the early tenth century Kostanti III sent an army into Alan territory and, with the Byzantine patriarch Nicolas Mystikos, converted the Ossetians, once again,

to Christianity: Nicolas asked the next Abkhaz king, Giorgi II, to appoint an archbishop for the Alans. Giorgi II made the seventh-century church Chqondidi ('great oak' in Mingrelian – built on the site of a pagan temple, formerly a place of human sacrifice) a cathedral. Under Abkhazia's leadership, Georgians baptized Ossetians and Circassians and built churches.

The succession of Giorgi II's sons was, as he feared, turbulent. After Demetre III inherited the throne, his younger brother Teodosi, exiled to Constantinople with another brother (Bagrat), was induced by dissident lords (Kartlians, Meskhians and Abkhaz) to return and overthrow Demetre: after a struggle involving both Tao and the chorespiscopate of Kakhetia, Demetre and Teodosi agreed to share power, but in 975 Demetre had his brother's eyes gouged out, and Teodosi III reigned a brief three years, his blindness exploited by the Kakhetians, who invaded Kartli.

In the fragmented ninth-century Georgia, Kakhetia was the largest and richest province, and Abkhazia-Egrisi the most stable, but Tao-Klarjeti was the country's legitimate cultural centre. Tao-Klarjeti was the seat of the heirs to the Iberian throne, Guaram III, his grandson Stepanoz III and the descendants of Adarnase III; Tao-Klarjeti, too remote for Arab punitive raids, had fortresses like Odzrkhe, and the monasteries of Opiza, Zarzma, Khandzta, centres of literature and learning, even if many of Georgia's leading scholars had fled abroad to monasteries from Mt Sinai to Mt Athos, and its military leaders fought for the Byzantine army.

One key factor in the rise of Tao-Klarjeti was new blood: a daughter of Guaram III married a refugee Armenian, Vasak Bagratun, son of Ashot III ('the Blind', 690–762), presiding prince of Armenia. Ashot was recognized by the caliph, but later overthrown and blinded by the Mamikonian family. (Historians accept this as the origin of the Bagratid dynasty in Georgia, but some insist that a separate Georgian Bagratid family already existed: in any case, the surname Bagrationi / Bagratun is probably of Iranian origin.) Some time after 807 Vasak and his Georgian bride had a son, Adarnase I, who inherited Klarjeti-Javakheti, jointly with the children (Juansher and Mihrandukht) of the martyred king Archil. Adarnase married his daughter Latavri to his co-heir Juansher, a marriage which angered Juansher's mother, Archil's dowager queen. She disapproved probably not of an alliance with the Armenian Bagratuns, but of the degree of consanguinity (Latavri was Juansher's cousin once removed). However, the Bagratuns (future Bagratids) claimed exemption: the treatise *De administrando imperio* of Constantine VII states: 'Iberia's *kouropalates* [Bagratids] say they descend from Uriah's wife, with whom Prophet and King David committed adultery . . . Because of this, Iberian princes marry relatives without impediment, deeming themselves to keep the Old Law.'

Juansher and Latavri were childless: in 813 all Klarjeti-Javakheti passed to Adarnase's son Ashot the Great (known today as St Ashot), the

first Bagratid entitled *kouropalates* of the Iberians. Fleeing the Arabs, Ashot had headed for Byzantine territory, but made a stand by Lake Paravani in Shavsheti, western Klarjeti, and Shavsheti, depopulated by war and disease, became his base: now safe from Arab incursions, it bordered on friendly Byzantine territory, and was close to Armenian principalities ruled by Ashot's Bagratun relatives. The male lines of the Guaramids (Guaram III's dynasty), the Chosroids (Archil's dynasty) and the Nersianids (Nerse's dynasty) had all died out: Ashot laid claim to Kartli, but was thwarted by Ismail ibn Shu'aib and Mohammed bin Atab, emirs of Tbilisi. Nevertheless, protected by Byzantium and the Abkhaz king Teodosi II (to whom he married off his daughter), Ashot repopulated and extended his territory, ruling a large swathe of Georgian land from his Tao capital, the rebuilt fortress-city of Artanuji that controlled roads to the Black Sea, to areas of Kartli outside the emir's control and to Kakhetia, even Caucasian Albania. Ashot also controlled trade routes from Trebizond to eastern Georgia and Armenia: his territory became a *samtavro* (principality), and his churchmen called him *mepe* (king). In 818, by confronting Tbilisi's emir Ismail ibn Shuab, who was defying Baghdad, Ashot led the caliph to recognize him as prince of Iberia and to back him against the Kakhetians. But Arab support was fickle: when the *wali* of Armenia, Khalid bin Yazid reasserted control over eastern Georgia, Ashot was pushed back to Tao-Klarjeti. In 826 or 830 he was murdered by noblemen, possibly in Arab pay, on an altar by the juncture of the rivers Çoruh and Tskhenistsqali (or, by other accounts, in Gardabani, southern Kakhetia).

The site of Georgia's new monasteries and churches, Tao-Klarjeti under Ashot the Great submitted to strong ecclesiastic rule: the life of Grigol, abbot of Khandzta, by Giorgi Merchule illustrates how powerful the Church was.

> The devil misled the King, and he brought a concubine into the castle and fornicated with her, for the demon of carnal love affected him badly, a man who never before had such habits, but was overcome by this evil sin. When the blessed Grigol heard of this soul-destroying matter, he was perturbed. The king turned to Saint Grigol, an elderly man, established in the Church, because he was a miracle-worker and greatly respected by God and man. And he deliberately had an interview with him. The king undertook to stop sinning and to send away the woman he had brought in.

Ashot the Great's great mistake was to bequeath his principality to his three sons. The middle son Bagrat I (826–76), probably at Byzantium's insistence, took the prestigious title of *kouropalates*. Bagrat ruled the district

of Kola and most of Tao, which reached deep into Anatolia and, eventually, proved to be the strategic core of Ashot's domain: Bagrat's successors could thus plausibly lay claim to the throne of all Georgia. The eldest son Adarnase II (826–69), a grand duke (Georgian *eristavt-eristavi*), ruled the capital, Artanuji, and the centre of his father's territory, Shavsheti and western Klarjeti. The youngest son Guaram (826–82) ruled the north: Samtskhe, Javakheti and Trialeti (western Kartli), and had the non-regal title *mampali* meaning 'ruler'.

On Ashot's death, the Arab seized his heirs' Kartlian territory and demanded taxes from their remaining domains, while the emir of Tbilisi sowed dissent between the brothers. Of the brothers, Bagrat reacted most cunningly, allying himself with the Caliphate's general Khalil bin Yazid against Emir Is'hak of Tbilisi and the Kakhetians; in 842 he was awarded the title of prince of Kartli, a title he lost when the emir emerged victorious. In 853, now supporting Bugha the Turk, Bagrat regained Kartli, but was expelled by King Demetre of Abkhazia.

Guaram *mampali* was eventually the luckiest of Ashot the Great's sons. In 880 he seized Gabulots, the last Shaibanid emir of Tbilisi, and deported him in chains to Constantinople, a triumph which won him western Kartli (Trialeti) and Javakheti. Married to a sister of Ashot V of Armenia, Guaram also acquired Armenian territory. Yet Guaram is famous for altruism: he gave lands to his brothers and to his Armenian brother-in-law, and allotted Trialeti's key fortress Kldekari to the feudal lord Liparit Baghvash, under the suzerainty of the future Davit I *kouropalates,* Guaram's nephew and Bagrat's son. (Liparit Baghvash, who already controlled Argveti, on the borders of Abkhazia and Kartli, thus became dangerously powerful.) Furthermore, Guaram infuriated his elder son Nasri by favouring his nephew as suzerain of Trialeti. Piety led Guaram to forfeit his gains. He retired as a monk to Opiza monastery, and bequeathed nothing to Nasri, who in 881 tried to grab Trialeti by murdering his cousin Davit I *kouropalates*. (Guaram *mampali*'s younger son Ashot predeceased his father; his daughter first married the usurper king Adarnase, and then Adarnase's executioner, King Bagrat I of Abkhazia.) Ashot's eldest son, Grand Duke Adarnase II, was the first brother to die; he had shut his wife, the daughter of King Bagrat I of Abkhazia, into a nunnery, and his second son predeceased him. His share of Tao-Klarjeti was split between his two surviving sons, Gurgen I (*kouropalates* of Tao after the murder by Nasri in 881 of Bagrat's eldest son Davit), and Smbat, who received Klarjeti.

Gurgen I lasted just ten years as *kouropalates* before dying in 891 of his wounds after fighting his cousin, the subsequent Adarnase IV (son of his predecessor Davit I), whom Byzantium had deemed too young to be *kouropalates*. Before this fatal clash, Gurgen had backed Adarnase and,

together with King Ashot of Armenia, had captured and executed, at Aspindza in 888, Nasri, the murderer of Davit *kouropalates*. (Nasri had rashly left asylum in Byzantium, hoping for Abkhaz help to regain territory in Kartli, since Nasri's sister had married King Bagrat I of Abkhazia.) Eventually, Adarnase IV alienated Gurgen by imitating the Armenia 'king' of Shirak and calling himself king. Gurgen expanded his territory, helped by having as father-in-law Smbat VIII Bagratun of Armenia. Gurgen's sons were thus doubly Bagratid, but this Bagratid Tao dynasty would die out after two generations. One of Gurgen I's sons, Grand Duke Ashot *kukhi* ('the unripe') of Klarjeti, won fame before dying in 918: he built the fine church of Tbeti, where only his monolithic statue still stands, and he commissioned the hagiographer Stepane of Tbeti to write the *Martyrdom of Mikel Gobron*. Another son of Gurgen I, Adarnase III, was father to Gurgen II 'the Great', who succeeded his uncle Ashot *kukhi* in 918, made war on his cousins and father-in-law, and conquered much of Tao, Klarjeti and Javakheti, thus financing the building of Khandzta cathedral. Gurgen II died in 941. His widow, the first and last Georgian queen-warrior, completed his conquest of Artanuji, her native city: Artanuji was wrested from her by male in-laws, and the line of Gurgen II of Tao was extinct.

Once Nasri was executed in 888 and Gurgen I died in 891, Adarnase IV was recognized by Byzantium as *kouropalates*. By taking over Guaram's territory, he claimed to be king of both Kartli and Tao-Klarjeti, i.e. of all southern and eastern Georgia. Tao and Armenia both attacked the Arab *wali* of Transcaucasia, Adarnase's reward being coronation at the hands of King Smbat I of Armenia in 899. The kings then turned on Kostanti III, King of Abkhazia, in a race to capture Kartlian territory. The Armenian alliance collapsed when Smbat, suspicious of Adarnase's increasing influence, released the captured king Kostanti. The former allies both paid dearly for their ruthlessness. In 914 Abul Qasim, the Sajid invader from Azerbaijan, tortured King Smbat to death, probably at Adarnase IV's instigation. Then King Adarnase IV (although he had helped Abul Qasim expel Kostanti III from Kartli) was himself forced out of Kartli: again, he ruled only Tao, expanding, with Byzantine assent, his realm to near today's Erzurum, building churches, before dying in 923.

Adarnase's eldest son called himself King Davit II, but was called merely *magistros*, not *kouropalates*: he was confined to lower Tao and Javakheti. The title *kouropalates* went to the next brother, Ashot II, who ruled Klarjeti and restored Opiza and Khandzta monasteries as productive scriptoria.[6] On Davit II's death in 937, Tao–Klarjeti and claims on Kartli passed to his brother Smbat I, who in his last year of life became *kouropalates* when Ashot II died in 954. In 958, Smbat I's son Bagrat II took over his father's titles (except for *kouropalates*): only 21 when he acceded, Bagrat was known as 'regveni' (the 'Simple').

The title *kouropalates* passed to Bagrat the Simple's cousin, Davit III of Tao (grandson of Ashot II of Tao and great-grandson of Adarnase IV). Davit III, born in the 930s, inherited Tao in 966 from his brother Bagrat the Simple. He rose from an obscure branch of the Bagratid family to glory as Davit the Great, thanks to his armies which rescued the formidable Byzantine emperor Basil II 'The Bulgar-slayer' and the empire's Anatolian possessions from the rebel Bardas Skliros. Basil and the Armenian-Byzantine General Bardas Phocas persuaded the reluctant Georgian *hierostrategos* (monk-warrior) Ioane Tornike to leave the Iberian monastery on Mt Athos and persuade Davit III that Bardas Skliros threatened both their realms. Under General Bardas Phocas, Davit III, Ioane Tornike and Peri Jojik led 12,000 Georgian cavalrymen with Byzantine and Armenian soldiers and in 979 at the battle of Pankalia near today's Kayseri routed Bardas Skliros, who fled to Muslim protection. (Charcoal graffiti in a church at Zarzma in Samtskhe record that the church was built thanks to Davit, but that the builders were recruited to fight Bardas Skliros.) The grateful Byzantines recognized Davit as *kouropalates* in 978; Basil II rewarded Davit III with a life-long, if not hereditary, grant of the 'upper lands': southern Tao stretching to Karnu Kalaki (today's Erzurum) and the sources of the Euphrates, the Araxes and the Çoruh. Basil II also let Ioane Tornike appropriate the proceeds of looting the 'upper lands' for the Iberian monastery on Mt Athos.

Ironically, Davit renewed his alliance with General Bardas Phocas after the latter began his own rebellion (at first, in alliance with Bardas Skliros, and then, after incarcerating his ally, on his own) against Basil II. Phocas soon conquered all Byzantium's territory in Asia Minor: Davit's decision to support him with 10,000 men must have seemed politic at the time. But Phocas was defeated in 989, and his allies faced Basil II's revenge. Davit III saved his skin by promising to bequeath his lands to the Byzantine empire. It is unclear whether he bequeathed just upper Tao (extending over Armenian principalities and Muslim emirates to Lake Van and the Araxes) which a grateful Byzantine empire had ceded to him, or whether Basil II meant all Tao-Klarjeti to revert to the empire on Davit III's death. (Perhaps this 'bequest', mentioned only by the eleventh-century Arab historian Yahya of Antioch, not by Georgian or Armenian chroniclers, was a falsification.) In any event, to seal the bargain, in 990 Basil II reaffirmed Davit as *kouropalates*.

While he held upper and lower Tao, Davit III took tolls from the trade route that ran through his territory from Armenia to Trebizond, and spent the income on towns, fortresses, monasteries and churches, such as Ishkhani, Oshki and Tbeti. Almost every hill in today's Artvin province of Turkey has the ruins of a cathedral or monastery built by Davit III. Archaeologists estimate that Tao-Klarjeti, a wedge about 100 miles wide

and long, had by 1000 some 300 churches, monasteries and citadels, and countless bridges, hospices and caravanserais, now vanished without trace.[7] Under Davit III, stonemasonry progressed, so that walls were constructed with no visible mortar. One major church, Oshki, was a miniature of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, not only in design (the new triconch shape) and materials (alabaster windows), but in the resources required to build it: inscriptions record that building Oshki took ten years, cost an annual 20,000 dramas, and 5,000 physoi of wine, 250 cartloads of grain, and used 70 masons and blacksmiths, 80 labourers, 30 draft oxen and 30 mules.[8] Cathedrals like Oshki were also seminaries preparing monk scholars. Tao-Klarjeti became the ecclesiastic centre of Georgia and handled foreign affairs directly: significantly, in 937 Archbishop Stepane of Ishkhani was consecrated not in the Georgian ecclesiastic capital Mtskheta, but in Trebizond. By 950, Georgian monastic centres abroad were of major importance for the culture of the whole Orthodox world, as well as for Georgia. Ioane and Ekvtime had founded the Iberian monastery on Mt Athos, and Davit commissioned translations of major Greek religious texts into Georgian from them and their acolytes.

Davit made Artanuji (today's Ardanuç, 20 miles east of Artvin) a capital city: he was the first Georgian ruler since Sassanid times to mint coins (the obverse inscribed 'Christ, have mercy on Davit', the reverse with a cross and initials signifying Davit *Kouropalates*). His contribution to Georgian unification was, however, accidental: childless, Davit III took advice from the one powerful Kartli feudal lord Ioane Marushisdze who, like Davit, envisaged a unified Georgia: Davit should ensure his succession and give the throne of Inner ('Shida') Kartli an heir, lest it be torn apart by feudal lords and rival states – Abkhazia, Kakhetia and the emirate. In 975 Davit III adopted his nephew, the fifteen-year-old future king Bagrat III. Young Bagrat was the son of Gurgen (who would adopt the title 'king of kings' in 994); his mother was Gurandukht of Abkhazia, his grandfathers King Giorgi II of Abkhazia and Bagrat II (the Simple), the still-living titular king of Kartli and nominal ruler of northern Tao. Davit took young Bagrat, and the latter's biological parents Gurgen and mother Gurandukht, to Uplistsikhe, then besieged by Kakhetian forces. The Kakhetians realized that all western and southern Georgia had now united against them, accepted Davit's presentation of Bagrat as 'heir of Tao, Kartli and Abkhazia, the son I have raised, whose governor and helper I am,' and withdrew to Kakhetia. Davit intervened, threatening war, when, shortly after his departure, Kartlian nobles and Kakhetians reoccupied Uplistsikhe and abducted Bagrat, Gurgen and Gurandukht to Kakhetia. In 980 young Bagrat himself led an army over the mountains into northwestern Kartli and at the battle of Moghrisi defeated a confederation of *aznauri* led by the notoriously unsubmissive Kavtar Tbeli: some were killed, some

fled, others were relieved of their fiefs and posts. Bagrat then appointed new and loyal aristocrats as dukes of Kartli and relieved his mother of her regal duties in Uplistsikhe, taking her with him to Kutaisi.

Davit acted just as decisively to ensure Bagrat inherited the Abkhaz throne. By his mother Gurandukht, young Bagrat was nephew and heir to the blind and childless king Teodosi III of Abkhazia. In 975, before Teodosi III even died, Davit invited the king of Armenia Smbat Bagratun to accompany him, Bagrat and Gurandukht to Kutaisi, where Bagrat was solemnly anointed king of Abkhazia. (Teodosi III remained king in name and was sent to Tao to live out the three years still remaining to him.)

Bagrat proved precociously far-sighted and ruthless: Davit III may have regretted adopting him: in 989 he suspected that Bagrat, now 30 and king of Abkhazia, was plotting to invade Tao and kill his foster-father. Only when Bagrat personally assured Davit that his army was in fact heading to Kartli, to besiege Kldekari castle and subdue the rebellious Rati Baghvashi (son of the troublesome Liparit), was trust restored. Davit III had already acted promptly and routed the army sent to Kldekari under Gurgen (Bagrat III's biological father); the unfortunate Gurgen, attacked by his own father (Bagrat II) and brother, was forced to take shelter in Shkhepi castle in Egrisi. Davit's suspicions were well founded: Bagrat had led his army not eastwards, but westwards (to deceive Rati, he said), and might well have been paid by Basil II to punish Davit III for earlier treachery. But Rati Baghvash, however, had really become dangerously powerful, controlling all central Kartli; Bagrat disempowered, if only temporarily, the Baghvash family by confining them to their ancestral domain, Argveti. A loyal Zviad Marushiani was made duke of Trialeti.

Bagrat III's grandfather, Bagrat II, then collaborated with Davit III and an Armenian force to dispossess Kurdish and Azerbaijani emirs. Even after submitting to Basil II, Davit III determinedly expanded Tao, expelling Muslims (particularly the newly arrived Turkish nomads) and importing Georgians and Armenians. He was ruthless: in 997, besieging Khlat, a Muslim-held, but Armenian-populated town, he used an Armenian church as stables and headquarters: the shocked Muslim defenders were informed that Davit thought a monophysite church no holier than a mosque. Yet Davit III sustained good relationship with Armenian kings, their rivals and successors, mediating over a long period between them: around 980, when King Smbat II of Ani tried to take the city of Kars from his nephew, Mushegh, Davit intervened with a peacekeeping force.

But the bequest made by the penitent Davit to the Emperor Basil proved his undoing. Conspirators poisoned his communion wine on the eve of Good Friday, 1000 (or 1001). Whoever hired the murderers – Basil II, Bagrat II, or even resentful Kartlian nobles – was impatient to possess the territory or the throne bequeathed by Davit III. As soon as Emperor

Basil (then overwintering with his army in Tarsus) heard of Davit's death, he crossed eastern Anatolia to claim his inheritance, the major part of Tao. The Georgian and Armenian nobles surrendered, after a brawl with 6,000 Russians ('Varangians'), Byzantine mercenaries, over foraging killed thirty Georgian lords.

The future king Bagrat III disputed his foster-father's bequest with Basil, but was conceded only the title of *kouropalates*. His father Gurgen *magistros*, based in northern Tao, tried to recover the territory Basil II had seized. In 994, six years before Davit III died, Gurgen *magistros*, as heir to Bagrat II the Simple, promoted himself king. Outside Tao, Gurgen also acted as regent for his son Bagrat in Kartli, and when Bagrat became King of Abkhazia in 978, Gurgen acted as co-ruler of Kartli, wrangling with Kartli's unbridled lords. He evidently felt humiliated when Byzantium made his son Bagrat *kouropalates*, while he remained a mere *magistros*, for in 1001 he challenged the Byzantines by besieging Oltisi (he was defeated by General Nicephorus Ouranos). Worse, Tao's feudal lords, including Peri Jojik, Davit III's general, threw in their lot with the Byzantines, who gave them imperial lands and posts, and emirs like Mumadid al-Daula of Apahunik, aggrieved by Davit III's conquests, also joined the Byzantines against Gurgen. Basil II occupied the southern Tao castle of Havachichi, and summoned Gurgen. Basil conceded a little territory, and a decade of peace between Byzantium and the Georgians ensued. Bagrat waited for his biological father Gurgen to die in 1008 before proclaiming himself king of most of Georgia – Kartli, as well as Tao-Klarjeti and Abkhazia-Egrisi – and trying to retrieve southern Tao. Byzantine conquest of Tao-Klarjeti, however, benefited the region: Basil II looked after towns and churches: he and his brother Constantine VIII reroofed Oshki cathedral. They also appointed Georgians and Armenians, for instance Peri Jojik, to administer the territory.

When Gurgen died in 1008, Bagrat III's title to the thrones of Tao-Klarjeti and Kartli, as well as Abkhazia, was undisputed: the prospect of ruling all Georgia became real. It was only a matter of time before Kakhetia and Hereti also submitted to a unified Georgia, while the emirate of Tbilisi lingered on. (Since the 970s, there also existed a small kingdom of Lore – sometimes known as Tashir-Dzorageti – on the border of today's Armenia and southern Kartli; it was ruled by a dynasty of Kvirike I, a name taken by Gurgen, son of Ashot III the Armenian 'king' of Shirak. This kingdom took some of the emirate's land, and even minted coins, but its politics were aligned to Davit III of Tao-Klarjeti and subsequent Georgian kings, and it was incorporated into Georgia in the early twelfth century without trauma.)

Just as China tolerated Hong Kong, a reminder of foreign humiliation, Georgia's kings put up with the emirate of Tbilisi long after the

Caliphate's power had dwindled. Arab historians describe the emirate, particularly under Jaffarid emirs from the 880s, with a judiciary, police, chancellery, customs service, religious police and mayor far superior to anywhere else in Transcaucasia; its function as a trading centre outweighed the embarrassment of having the country's former capital under alien rule. Tbilisi quickly recovered from Bugha the Turk's slaughter of half the population: by 1000, its population of about 100,000 equalled that of Paris or Samarkand. Its 'lemon-shaped' public baths were heated by natural springs; the Kura was crossed by a pontoon bridge; the emirs minted silver dirhams used throughout Georgia. To judge by graffiti marking the invasion of Bugha the Turk, the Christian cathedral still functioned. The Kura divided Muslim aristocrats and their citadel on the left bank from Georgian townspeople with their elders and cathedral on the right bank. To tenth-century Arab traders, Tbilisi's defects were Kartli's and Armenia's bad roads, the kafir territory to be crossed in order to reach this Sunni island,[9] and the sight of unaccompanied, unveiled women in the streets. Ibn Haukal describes his visit in 977–9:[10] 'Tiflis has floating watermills for wheat and other grains. The inhabitants show overwhelming hospitality and concern for strangers' safety . . . They are Sunni adherents . . . Tiflis, unlike Armenia, is wholly Muslim . . . No stranger can ever spend a night at home [such is the hospitality].' For Bagrat III and his successors, it was too early to conquer the emirate, even though the Caliphate of Baghdad had lost interest in this outpost: Arab Tbilisi brought not just commercial prosperity; it also counterbalanced the ambitions of Kartli's lords, like the Baghvash family, and attacking the emirate might entail war with other Muslim emirates, still too strong to overcome.

5
Unification

✠

The new millennium began auspiciously for Georgia with a decade of peace under an energetic, young, indisputably legitimate ruler: towns were rebuilt, agriculture and culture prospered; a new political consensus favoured a single monarchy. New words entered the language from Arabic or Armenian: *kalaki*, 'town', and *ubani*, 'suburb', as opposed to the earlier *tsikhe*, 'citadel' – testifying to urbanization. Towns became trading and crafts centres, not just places of worship or refuge. Merchants joined guilds under a *vacharukhutsesi*, or chief merchant. New towns appeared: in the south, Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe ('Newtown', 'Newcastle'); in the east, Telavi. In Abkhazia / Egrisi centres like Tsikheguji were superseded by Kutaisi, Tskhumi (today's Sukhumi) and its port, Anakopia. New industries flourished: Tbilisi and Rustavi were known for glass and glazes; Dmanisi, formerly a citadel, produced raw and woven silk, as well as glass. Iron smelters of lower Kartli, Svanetia and Ajaria became renowned. Under the Arabs, agriculture benefited from the *gutani*, a deep metal plough, pulled by up to sixteen oxen, used until the nineteenth century, requiring peasants to own draft animals collectively. Peasants diversified into sericulture to clothe their lords, and into apiculture for beeswax church candles and for honey. As feudalism grew, freedom withered, but production intensified. Political and economic stability, new centres for prayer, scholarship, and profitable church landholdings induced Georgian scholars and monks to return from refuge at Mt Athos, Mt Sinai, Antioch or Jerusalem, and compose hymns and hagiographies on Georgian soil. Bagrat minted coins in Kutaisi: demonstrating his political ambitions, the obverse read in Georgian, 'O Christ, magnify Bagrat king of the Abkhaz', and in Arabic, 'There is no God but one', while the reverse read in Arabic, 'Mohammad messenger of God'.[1]

Bagrat's early campaigns chastised frondeurs like Rati Baghvash. Bagrat was backed by his mother Gurandukht, dowager queen of Abkhazia, by the Kartli duke Zviad Marushiani (the Marushiani, exceptional

among Kartli's feudals, upheld a centralized monarchy – Ioane Marushisdze had urged Davit III of Tao to adopt Bagrat, thereby uniting the two royal families), and by the king's own appointee in 1001, the Catholicos patriarch of all Georgia, Melkisedek I, who replaced Svimeon III, Catholicos of Iberia. Bagrat made Bedia, in Abkhazia, his ecclesiastical capital, but let Melkisedek, once stability was achieved in 1011, re-establish the patriarchy in its original home, Mtskheta. Melkisedek went to Constantinople to reassert the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, symbolized as the (re-)construction of the Church of the Living Pillar at Mtskheta.[2] (Melkisedek may have visited Constantinople around 1022, in the three-year lull in conflict between Basil II and King Giorgi I of Georgia.) Bagrat later commissioned other cathedrals, like the intricate Nikortsminda in Racha. He endowed Kutaisi with a royal palace. In 1003, on a hill overlooking the right bank of the Rioni, a new cathedral was Georgia's most magnificent building. Forty-five by 35 metres in area, it was a vastly expanded version of the Oshki church built by Davit III of Tao. (One innovation was marking the building's date with Arabic numerals.) Its opening was attended by every Georgian and foreign dignitary Bagrat could muster. Kutaisi cathedral's foundation stone bears only Bagrat's and Gurandukht's names, although another inscription asks Christ to 'greatly magnify the mighty Bagrat' and alludes to all Bagrat's immediate family. Likewise, Gurandukht and Bagrat are the only names on a gold altar chalice given to the patriarchal cathedral at Bedia.

After Gurgen *magistros* died, Bagrat pursued unification by invading Kakhetia and Hereti. (Possibly, he made a preliminary raid in 1003: a manuscript from Shaori near Tqibuli, dated 1003, has a colophon noting this as the year that Kakhetia was pillaged.) Bagrat's first war was in 1010 against Davit, Chorepiscopos of Kakhetia, who died that same year and was succeeded by Kvirike III ('the Great'), king of Kakhetia and Hereti. (A relief at Zedazeni monastery near Mtskheta depicts Kvirike III making an alliance with an Ossete ruler, Urdure.) Bagrat's campaign was mounted from Mtskheta; despite surrendering many castles, the Kakhetians held out for two years before conceding Bagrat III's suzerainty (Kvirike III, however, retained his title). Emir Fadl I bin Muhammad, emir of Arran (formerly Caucasian Albania), took advantage of Kakhetia's and Hereti's plight to attack from the east. Bagrat, joined by King Gagik I of Armenia, took the fight to the emir's capital, Shamkor, which became a tribute-paying vassal of Georgia.

Ruthlessness, energy and luck characterized Bagrat III. Waging war on Kakhetia, he found time to visit Panaskerti, his castle in Tao, and summon his two cousins Sumbat and Gurgen of Klarjeti for 'consultations'. They were arrested, taken a hundred miles over the mountains, and incarcerated in Tmogvi, a new fort on the upper Kura. Sumbat's son Bagrat, and

Gurgen's son Demetre, escaped to Byzantine territory, but Sumbat and Gurgen were murdered. The Klarjeti Bagrations were now extinct: no rival Bagratids could claim the Georgian throne. Bagrat had a genealogy, 'The Divan of Abkhaz Kings', compiled, proving himself heir to the 300-year-old Abkhaz Anchba dynasty. Then *Bagrat's Legal Code*, for the first time, listed crimes against the person and the monetary cost of committing these crimes. (Bagrat III is thought the most likely of all Bagrats between 1000 and 1400 to have promulgated this code.)

Aged 52, Bagrat died on 7 May 1014 at Panaskerti, where he had lured his cousins to their doom. His faithful lord Zviad Marushiani took his body north for burial in Bedia cathedral. Of Bagrat's consort Marta we know only that she bore him two sons, Giorgi I, heir to the throne, and Basil, and that she probably died before him. Bagrat III had outdone even Vakhtang Gorgasali: after 500 years, Georgia was united, centralized and free of foreign domination. These achievements were possible because the Byzantine empire was preoccupied with the threat from the Bulgarians, and because newly arrived Turkic nomads had wrenched the Caliphate from the Arabs.

Giorgi I, like his father, was a boy on his accession (in medieval Georgia, adulthood began at sixteen). But Bagrat's kingdom tottered: Kvirike III declared himself sovereign ruler again of Kakhetia and Hereti, although he at first supported Georgia against external enemies. Giorgi I quarrelled with his father's counsellor, Zviad Marushiani, and arrested him. The Baghvash family reasserted itself: Liparit (grandson of the previous Liparit), as an avowed king's man, was given back Trialeti, only to reveal his hereditary greed for territory and power.

As soon as he acceded, Giorgi struck where the enemy seemed weakest, in southern Tao. For four years he was victorious, taking back castles ceded to Byzantium, but in 1018 Basil II, after quelling the Bulgarians, issued an ultimatum to the Georgians. Instead of negotiating, Giorgi enlisted the Fatimid sultan al-Hakim of Egypt to mount a seaborne and overland campaign against Byzantium. The sultan died, and the ambitious plan lapsed. More modestly, Giorgi then approached Gagik of Armenia, who had, like most Armenian kings, lost territory to the Byzantines in the 960s. Giorgi's first wife Mariam was Armenian, daughter of Senekerim II Artsrun, king of Vaspurakan; Giorgi also had good relations with Hovane-Smbat, king of Shirak, who owed his throne to Georgian mediation.

Then, in 1021, Basil II led a huge army to take all the lands that had ever belonged to Davit III of Tao. Giorgi's response was unimpressive: he retreated from an initial encounter at Basiani (southern Tao) to his fortress at Oltisi, which he burned down to deny it to the Byzantines. Basil II defeated Giorgi's rearguard by Lake Çıldır and pursued the Georgians to Trialeti, burning and pillaging as he went. Only in Trialeti did Giorgi, with Kakhetian

help, rally. Basil retreated, but first forced Giorgi's Armenian allies to surrender: Hovane–Smbat swore allegiance to the Byzantines, and Senekerim bequeathed his kingdom to the empire, in exchange for appointment as a provincial governor. Basil then overwintered on the coast at Trebizond.

In spring a Byzantine fleet stormed Georgia's Black Sea ports: Giorgi negotiated a truce. Then the tables turned: Basil was targeted by a new conspiracy, this time by Bardas Phocas's son Nikiphorus, helped by Giorgi I's General Andronike (Giorgi's brother-in-law and the son of Davit III's general Peri Jojik). But the conspirators were betrayed and executed. In the ensuing campaign Giorgi lost not just Tao, but also Klarjeti, Kola and Javakheti to the Byzantines. These lands were incorporated, with captured Armenian kingdoms and Muslim emirates, into a new Byzantine 'Iberian Province', over which an imperial governor (albeit an ethnic Georgian) was appointed. Worse, Giorgi had to surrender as a hostage to Constantinople for three years Bagrat, his three-year-old son and heir by Mariam.

In 1024 Giorgi tried to recover lost territory. He used diplomacy, but suspecting his own negotiator, Bishop Zakar Valashkerteli, of bad faith, banned him from returning from Constantinople. (Zakar spent his exile commissioning manuscripts for Georgian churches.) War was the next option. Helped by the Byzantine governor of Vaspurakan, Nikiphorus Comnenus, whose family would soon usurp the Byzantine throne, Giorgi regained Trialeti and Javakheti. Basil II died in 1025, but his brother Constantine VIII quickly sent a punitive expedition. But Constantine was too slow to bar the return of the boy hostage Bagrat, who had been spirited home by Georgian emissaries. On 16 August 1027, still under 30, during a desultory war, Giorgi I died. He left Georgia vulnerable to further encroachments, and his tangled marital history endangered the succession. He apparently terminated his marriage to Mariam, by whom he had a son and three daughters (one of whom, Gurandukht, was given to the uxorious Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachos as a mistress). Mariam took the veil when Giorgi remarried, re-entering politics only when her infant son inherited the throne. Giorgi's second marriage was to an Ossetian princess Alde, whom he installed at Anakopia on the coast (Alde, as a royal Ossetian, was unlikely to have been a concubine; Byzantine chroniclers record Alde, as the daughter of a Byzantine ally, being given Anakopia as a fief in 1033, since Giorgi I's will left her destitute). By Giorgi Alde had a son, Demetre, whom feudal lords would support when trying to unseat the next king, Bagrat IV.

Like his father and grandfather, Bagrat IV was a boy king. He was anointed in the magnificent Tao cathedral of Bana,[3] built by Adarnarse in the late 800s for crowning and burying kings. Like his grandfather, but unlike his father, Bagrat IV had a mother who, as the widow and daughter of kings, could advise him. Mariam was a formidable counsellor and diplo-

mat: she held her own with nobles like Liparit IV Baghvash of Trialeti, who was co-regent. Thanks to a period as an abbess, she spoke Greek as fluently as Georgian and Armenian. In 1028, Emperor Romanos III attacked Tao: some feudal and ecclesiastic lords went over to Romanos; the peasantry, treated liberally by Byzantium, also preferred imperial rule. The Klarjeti Bagratids, dispossessed if not murdered by Bagrat III, were also pro-Byzantine, especially Demetre Klarji, pretender to the Georgian throne. A few notables like Ezra of Ancha and Saba of Tbeti stood by Bagrat IV, but Byzantine armies reached Trialeti before being stopped by Liparit IV and defeated in Shavsheti by Saba of Tbeti. Needing a truce, Mariam and the regents invited the prestigious abbot Giorgi Mtatsmindeli to leave Mt Athos and intercede (and also reform the Georgian Church), but hostilities blocked his journey.

In 1031 Mariam went to Constantinople to negotiate peace personally with Romanos III. She succeeded brilliantly, not only ending hostilities and winning Bagrat IV recognition as *kouropalates*, but also returning with a guarantee of peace, a child-bride for her son. This bride was Helena, niece of Romanos III Argyros. Within days of Mariam's and Helena's disembarkation on Georgian territory, the princess was married to Bagrat in Bana cathedral, where he had been crowned four years earlier.

Unfortunately, Helena died a few months later. The Byzantines now saw no reason to underwrite Georgia. Their fleet took Anakopia, where Bagrat IV's half-brother lived with his mother, the Ossetian princess Alde, and brought Demetre and Alde (who doubtless feared repression by Mariam and Bagrat) to Constantinople as a puppet Georgian royal family. For the next two decades Byzantium, while avoiding open hostilities, intrigued with factions subverting Bagrat IV.

Bagrat remarried: Princess Borena, sister of the future Ossetian king Dorgolel, bore him the future Giorgi II, and a daughter Marta, who would safeguard Georgia from Greek hostility by marrying (as Maria of Alania[4]) Emperor Michael VII Doukas. These two strategic marriages made the Georgians optimistic: in 1032 the church of Ishkhani, built in 650 by the refugee Armenian dyophysite Catholicos Nerses III, and rebuilt by Georgians in 830 and 954, now became a major cathedral, as did Tbeti church, famous for its dour monolithic statue of Ashot *kukhi* of Klarjeti.

But feudal factions soon showed their hand. In 1032 Liparit IV Baghvash and Ivane, one of five Abazasdze brothers, invaded the emirate of Tbilisi, captured its castle of Birtvisi and the new emir Jaffar III bin Ali. They delivered their prisoner to Bagrat and Mariam, who realized that Liparit and Abazasdze, strengthened and aggressive in Kartli, threatened them more than did a mercenary emir in Tbilisi: Jaffar III was restored to Tbilisi. Liparit, infuriated, began 25 years' subversion of Bagrat. At first, a semblance of unity prevailed: in 1037 Bagrat, now of age to lead an army,

joined Liparit in besieging Tbilisi. In 1040, as the emir prepared to flee the starving city, Bagrat offered him a truce in exchange for Partskhisi, the emirate's southern outpost. Jaffar remained emir; Liparit seethed. Only fear that the emir of Ganja might help Jaffar deterred Liparit from further aggression.

Islam was now only a relict on Georgian soil: Bagrat IV's coins have the Virgin and a Greek inscription on the obverse, with Georgian initials on the reverse, but no Arabic, though the misshapen Georgian letters indicate that the mint still employed Arabs. Preserving a weakened, but compliant Muslim emirate enabled Bagrat IV to bully Kakhetia and Hereti. In 1040 he burned down Bodoji, a fortress-palace in the upper Iori valley which Kvirike III's adopted son and successor Gagik (r. 1039–58) made Kakhetia's capital (this catastrophe made the Kakhetians move their capital east over the mountains to Telavi). Liparit, however, intervened on the Kakhetian side, and Bagrat withdrew. Liparit also ceased hostilities, sensing that without Byzantine help he could not win. Bagrat appeased Liparit by appointing him duke of all Kartli, but Liparit was dissatisfied, and his promotion made the Abazasdze brothers envious.

Next, Bagrat exploited Byzantium's laxity: they had left their Iberian theme under an ethnic Georgian viceroy, defended only by the local population. Bagrat reoccupied Tao, and cut Byzantine access to the province by seizing the port of Hopa. The empire responded by sending Liparit and Demetre the pretender with mercenary Varangians,[5] it is said, under the future king of Norway, Harald Hardrada. With Kakhetian help, the Varangians defeated Bagrat IV in Kartli, at Sasireti near Kaspi. (The chronology is problematic: Georgian sources date the battle of Sasireti to 1045–7, when Harald Hardrada seems to have returned to Russia.) Liparit and Davit, king of Lore, with the Byzantines and disenchanted Georgian nobles, attempted a palace coup: the plot failed because Liparit could not take the fortress of Ateni south of Gori, and the pretender Demetre died in 1042.

Bagrat tried to forestall Byzantine invasion by recapturing Anakopia, but in mid-battle he heard of the death of Jaffar III, emir of Tbilisi, and abandoned the Abkhazian battlefield to his Abkhaz general Prince Otagho Shervashidze (Chachba). At Dighomi, outside Tbilisi, Bagrat met the cavalry of the city's Georgian elders, and went to the emir's palace (the last important Muslim site on the right bank of the Kura), where he installed a royal garrison. Muslim forces on the left bank resisted, however; then Liparit brought his own army to take the city: Bagrat's forces had to ride out to repel him.

In 1047 Liparit secured Kakhetian, Armenian and Byzantine help to attack Kartli again, and briefly settled in Uplistsikhe, before Bagrat IV counterattacked. Liparit then openly sided with Byzantium, governing all the territory Byzantium had captured in the 1020s, helping General

Katakolon Magistros and the Armenian Vest Aaron defend the Iberian theme from Seljük Turks. To Bagrat's delight, Liparit was captured by the Seljüks in 1049. In Tbilisi, after fighting the Georgian elders, Jaffar III's sons Mansur and Abu'l-Haija were deposed: for the whole of the 1050s the city-state became an emirate in name, but a republic in reality. Ali bin Fadl, emir of Ganja, was in 1049 no threat to Georgian control of Tbilisi and Lore, for he was facing Seljük Turks and needed Bagrat IV as an ally.

Bagrat had now dispatched his mother Mariam to Armenia, where, as King Senekerim's daughter, she received nine fortresses around Ani, which she garrisoned with Georgian forces. Bagrat's supremacy was recognized: the Byzantines promoted him from *kouropalates* to *nobelissimus*. But his triumph was short-lived, for in 1051 the Byzantines ransomed Liparit from the Seljüks, and sent him back to Georgia.

Bagrat IV felt compelled to visit Constantinople with his mother and leading courtiers and negotiate. The infant future Giorgi II nominally ruled in Kutaisi, while Bagrat's diplomatic mission turned into three years' captivity. Liparit persuaded Bagrat's naive Queen Borena that Bagrat would never be released; Borena let Liparit take Giorgi over the mountains to Ruisi cathedral and crown him king of Kartli with his aunt Gurandukht (Bagrat's sister) as regent and Liparit as royal tutor. To Borena, her husband captive in Byzantium, her son at Liparit's mercy, are attributed lines inscribed on an icon of the Virgin in a Svanetian church:

> O Virgin who took away Eve's guilt, saying to Gabriel:
> 'I am the maid of the Lord', rescue me, thy sentinel,
> The much-troubled Borena who wanders on earth.
> Let the force that was drunk with the first blood wane.[6]

The Byzantines naturally wanted Georgia as fragmented as Armenia, even though a centralized monarchy was more use to them against the Seljük menace than a patchwork of quarrelling principalities. By the mid-1050s they understood this, and released Bagrat IV, at Gurandukht's request, but on their terms. (His mother Mariam stayed on for two or three years in Byzantium, touring holy places and monasteries, and had to be dissuaded from visiting Jerusalem, then threatened by the Saracens.) Bagrat was recognized as sovereign of all Georgia – by 1062 he was promoted to the title *sebastos* – but Liparit, only nominally subject to Bagrat, with powerful friends among both Turks and Greeks, controlled the heir to the throne, and himself became *archontes* (non-hereditary king) of Meskheti (now better known as Samtskhe), virtually all southwest Georgia.

This settlement in fact doomed Liparit. The Meskhian nobility, notably Sula Kalmakheli and his family, loathed this outsider. In 1058 Bagrat arrested Liparit, and escorted his sons Ivane and Niania to Kutaisi.

Liparit was stripped of his Trialeti fief, then tied to a gibbet. Reprieved by Bagrat, he was forcibly ordained as a monk and deported to Constantinople; Niania died in exile in Armenia; Ivane, although allowed to return to ancestral Baghvash lands in Argveti, voluntarily left for Byzantium. From Constantinople Liparit appealed to Bagrat, offering the crown all Baghvash lands, if his son Ivane could return. Bagrat assented: a fatal mistake.

By 1062 Bagrat IV felt free to turn to cultural matters. Collating and editing the legends and early chronicles of *The Life of Georgia*, our main, sometimes sole source for the country's history, was done, undoubtedly with royal support, by Leonti Mroveli (bishop of Ruisi) in the 1060s (an inscription commemorating Leonti's building of a grotto is dated 1066). Around 1060 Bagrat lured back to Georgia the elderly Giorgi Mtatsmindeli, now a close companion of his mother, Queen Mariam. Giorgi had so successfully turned the Iberian monastery into a centre of Georgian scholarship that envious Greek monks, preferring a life of inert contemplation, were hounding Georgians, 'over-erudite heretics', off the Holy Mountain. Giorgi agreed to reform the Georgian Church, whereupon Bagrat sent him back to Byzantium with 80 orphans to supplement the Georgian contingent of monk scholars. (The information comes from a Latin version of the life of Giorgi, somewhat suspect, for it shows the Byzantine emperor, a mere decade after the schism between the eastern and western Churches, delighted by Giorgi's argument that the Armenians are heretics, the Greeks erring and the Romans the only true Christians.) Georgian monks at St Simon's monastery on 'Black Mountain' near Antioch were also harassed by Greeks and denounced to the patriarch of Antioch, who however ruled that Georgians like Giorgi Mtatsmindeli were sufficiently learned and orthodox. The friction arose, in fact, from the Georgian Church's insistence on autocephaly, its independence of Antioch, whose patriarch wanted to subordinate Georgia, king and bishops, to his authority. Giorgi Mtatsmindeli produced historical proof of Georgian autocephaly, but the tension grew. Eventually, by 1100, many monks returned to Georgia's monasteries, where they could work and pray freely. Bagrat IV was personally interested in the Holy Cross monastery in Jerusalem. Founded by Prokhore the Georgian, it was generously endowed by Queen Mariam in the 1040s, and superseded the ancient Palestinian monastery of Mar Saba as a place of pilgrimage, a scriptorium and, after the Latin conquest in 1099, a meeting point for Georgian and western plenipotentiaries.

Never neglecting military affairs, Bagrat resumed the conquest of Kakhetia. First, he prevented the Kakhetians seizing Tbilisi when the city elders sought a monarch to protect them from the Seljüks. The Sheddadid Kurdish ruler of Ani, Abul Aswar, a Muslim tolerant of Christians, declined: he feared Bagrat. Aghsartan, king of Kakhetia and Hereti since 1058, was interested in Tbilisi, but was paid off by Bagrat IV, who installed

his own garrison and viceroy, a *shihna*, in Tbilisi, before declaring war on King Aghsartan. In 1064, Aghsartan contacted the new Seljük sultan Alp Arslan, and accepted Islam, enduring circumcision to gain protection.

The remaining eight years of Bagrat's reign was spent fighting Alp Arslan. Bagrat was nearly captured with his family and Queen Mariam in Tao when the Seljüks attacked. Akhalkalaki's fortifications were unfinished:[7] the citadel was taken, and in three days its inhabitants killed or enslaved. The Turks then withdrew to Ani in Armenia. As a peace condition, Alp Arslan demanded Bagrat IV's niece. Bagrat agreed, but on her mother's side the princess was also a niece of King Kvirike of Lore, who refused his consent. (King Kvirike was married to Bagrat's sister Gurandukht, and the niece was Gurandukht's daughter Marekhi.[8]) Bagrat promptly sent forces under an aide, Varaz-Bakur Gamrekeli, to Lore and had the Lore nobility arrest Kvirike and his brother Smbat. Like Liparit, Kvirike was threatened with execution: he had to surrender not only his niece to Alp Arslan, but also, as punishment for demurring, Lore's northern fortress of Samshvilde to Kartli. (Alp Arslan later ceded Marekhi to his vizier Nizam al-Mulk.) At the same time (1065) Bagrat secured a prestigious alliance by dispatching his daughter Marta to Constantinople, where (changing her name, as was Byzantine tradition, to Mariam, later known as Maria of Alania) she married Michael VII Doukas, Constantine X's son. As a little girl, Marta had been a fellow-hostage with her father nine years earlier in Constantinople, and the Georgian monk Giorgi Mtsire had prophesied she might return as an empress. In fact, she was twice empress, for when in 1078 Michael Doukas was overthrown and forced to take holy orders, she married his enemy, Nikephoros III. Her later years were spent intriguing to make her son Constantine emperor and looking after Georgian monasteries in Byzantium. Well-placed daughters and nieces were as important as sons and nephews for the Georgian monarchy's security.

Alp Arslan, however, was less inclined than the Byzantine emperors to put family ties above political advantage. When Bagrat IV was winning a new campaign against Kakhetia, Alp Arslan attacked from the east, and drove him back into Kartli. Alp Arslan was backed by his vassal Aghsartan of Kakhetia (who retrieved his Kakhetian castles), and by everyone whom Bagrat had ever offended: Al-Fadl bin Muhammad, the Seljük-puppet emir of Caucasian Albania and of Tbilisi with 33,000 men; the aggrieved Kvirike of Lore. These allies drove deep into Kartli, causing enormous damage, and reached Sveri, only 40 miles from Kutaisi. Only the severe winter from 10 December 1068 until February 1069 saved Bagrat's kingdom. Bagrat IV sent Ivane Baghvash to seek peace; Alp Arslan demanded tribute, but felt the cold so acutely that he retreated before receiving an answer. On his way east, he took Tbilisi and Rustavi and gave them to

Emir al-Fadl. Bagrat recouped some losses in the following year: he invaded Tbilisi, and routed al-Fadl, who was then detained by Aghsartan of Kakhetia and, no doubt at Alp Arslan's instigation, sold to Bagrat in exchange for a few castles. A new, compliant emir was installed in Tbilisi.

Next Bagrat asked Queen Borena's brother, King Dorgolel the Great of Ossetia, for assistance: tens of thousands of Ossetian horsemen crossed the Daryal Pass to help Bagrat loot Ganja and recapture cities and citadels. Bagrat dared to withhold taxation from the Seljüks, appeasing Alp Arslan with just one consignment of presents. Alp Arslan had now set his sights on the Byzantine empire and lost interest in further Caucasian conquest. His triumph came in 1071 at the battle of Manzikert when Emperor Romanos IV was captured, doomed to die in captivity, and Byzantine dominance of Asia Minor was annihilated. On 24 November 1072 Bagrat IV, who had been suffering from a stomach illness, died. (Three weeks later, on the banks of the Oxus, Alp Arslan was stabbed to death by a prisoner.) Bagrat IV was buried in the monastery of Chqondidi. Queen Mariam had outlived all her children.

Giorgi II acceded at the age of eighteen to what seemed a secure throne and a peaceful realm: he was already recognized by Byzantium as *kouropalates* and now became *nobelissimus*. He had his grandmother Queen Mariam and the prestigious cleric Giorgi Mtatsmindeli as counsellors. That first winter, and the first half of 1073, were tranquil: the new Seljük leader, Malik Shah, was still rallying his forces. Soon, however, Giorgi's mettle was tested: Ivane Liparit conspired, notably with Niania Kuabulisdze and Vardan, duke of Svanetia. The rebels occupied part of Kartli and took Kutaisi, looting the royal treasury. Giorgi's forces defeated the rebels, but the king began, as he would continue, by appeasing, not punishing traitors. The Baghvash family rebelled again, this time with the Orbelianis; defeated, they were assuaged with the Kartli fortresses of Samshvilde and Kldekari. Liparit then seized Gagi castle (15 miles downstream of Tbilisi), and sold it to the emir of Ganja. That summer Malik Shah attacked first Ganja and then Georgia from the east. Baghvash treachery went further: Ivane Baghvash sent his son Liparit V to meet the sultan, who distrusted the Baghvash and detained Liparit. Al-Fadl, emir of Ganja, was also imprisoned, but released when he and the emirs of Dvin and Dmanisi joined the Seljük invaders.

Liparit soon broke with Malik Shah; the Seljüks, in revenge, attacked first the Baghvash lands in Samshvilde, then all Georgia. Giorgi II now had Aghsartan of Kakhetia on his side: in autumn 1075 they defeated the Seljüks at the battle of Partskhisi[9] (on the river Algeti, southeast of Tbilisi). Buoyed up by success, Giorgi went westwards and reoccupied, unopposed, land annexed by Byzantium: in Abkhazia he retook Anakopia and several castles; in the south a swathe from Klarjeti to Javakheti. The Byzantines, no

longer claiming territory in the Caucasus, needing Georgia as an ally against the Seljüks, proclaimed Giorgi II caesar. Giorgi was also given Kars, which the fleeing Byzantines left to their *domestikos* of the east, an ethnic Georgian, Gregory Pakourianos (Grigol Bakuriani): Giorgi gave Kars to the Shavsheli family.

Victories continued for two years. Then, in 1077, Malik Shah, confident that Byzantium was powerless to help Georgia, overwhelmed first Tbilisi, then Erzurum and Georgia's southern outpost, Oltisi. On 24 June 1080 the Seljüks took Qveli castle in northern Tao, seizing the country's treasure and munitions, and nearly capturing Giorgi. Some nobles threw in their lot with the Turkish general Emir Ahmad: Giorgi was driven into Abkhazia, almost into the Black Sea. The Turks also reached the coast, but concentrated on looting Kutaisi and Artanuji, making the new and old Bagratid capitals uninhabitable ruins. Malik Shah established a pattern, overwintering south of the mountains, but returning the following spring to slaughter and enslave Georgian peasants, while in Anatolia a newly founded Seljük sultanate expanded to the Black, Mediterranean and Aegean seas. Seljüks brought their herds of horses and cattle and settled, ruining Georgia's arable land and vineyards. The disruption of agriculture caused starvation even in highlands that never saw a Turkish soldier. The following three years saw the same catastrophic invasions: the chronicler of Davit the Builder, Giorgi II's successor, recalls: 'The country was devastated and the fields turned into forests, and instead of human beings, wild animals and wildfowl inhabited the land.' In Georgia, as in Armenia, churches became stables, and priests were massacred.

By 1083 despair set in. A monk's colophon reads: 'I have been a disciple in times of woe and anguish, of persecution and slavery, of devastation and death, when all Samtskhe has been utterly wasted . . . and the remains of its fortresses are just pitiful and upsetting.'[10] Giorgi and his kingdom could stand no more: they could not even rally an army to repel the invaders. Giorgi consulted his privy council and offered Malik Shah tribute; Giorgi travelled to Isfahan and was received by the Seljük court, who agreed to stop the horde's raids in return for heavy annual tribute and military service. (Filaret Varazhnun, Armenian ruler of Cilicia, and Fariburz of Shirvan were driven to make the same capitulation by 1086.) The chronicler of Davit IV, contrasting the son's brilliance with the father's incompetence, portrays Giorgi II cravenly petitioning a Christian-loving Malik Shah. (Influenced by a cultured Persian vizier, Malik Shah could behave as a gracious despot as well as a nomad warrior.)

Turkish raids and looting, however, continued unabated. Giorgi II approached Malik Shah again: this time, at whose initiative we do not know, Malik Shah agreed to recognize Giorgi II as king of Kakhetia if he joined a Seljük attack on Kakhetia. Even in the Machiavellian south

Caucasus, this volte-face was shocking. In October 1084 Seljüks and Kartlians began a siege of Vejini castle in southern Kakhetia. Treachery turned to farce after heavy snow frustrated the besiegers. Giorgi II went off hunting in the nearby forests,[11] while the Seljüks turned to looting the whole Iori valley. Then Malik Shah and King Aghsartan came to terms. The Kakhetian king reaffirmed Islam, and joined the Seljüks in looting Kartli and pursuing Giorgi's army back to the Likhi mountains. Some Kartlian nobles went over to the Kakhetians: Dzagan Abuletisdze handed Mukhrani citadel and the frontier fortress of Zedazeni to Aghsartan.

The Kutaisi court forgave Giorgi's deviousness, but not his incompetence. His realm had shrunk to Abkhazia-Egrisi; Kartli and Tao were expiring under Seljük savagery. This grim period became known as the Great Turkdom. Giorgi placated his nobles temporarily with land, money and privileges. Early in 1089, earthquakes and aftershocks added to the misery. They seemed a heavenly portent: in Syria, Palmyra was annihilated by the earthquake, and Georgia, too, seemed doomed. Giorgi's ministers, led by the bishop of Chqondidi, made him abdicate in favour of his sixteen-year-old son, Davit, who was demonstrating precocious political and military talents (and may have helped overthrow his father). Giorgi's consort, Elene (of whom nothing is known), had died by then: Davit stood alone.

6
Davit the Builder

✠

No Georgian ruler ever equalled the achievements of Davit IV *aghmashenebeli* (meaning 'Builder' or 'Restorer'). Reigning from 1089 to 1125, he reunited the kingdom and expelled all invaders, created a flourishing civil administration, army, legal system, Church, feudal hierarchy and secular culture, and made Georgia for the next century the regional power. Exceptionally intelligent, a linguist and a scholar, decisive, self-critical, creative and, above all, able to perceive windows of opportunity, Davit IV transformed the demoralized rump state he had inherited.[1] He is conventionally known as Davit IV, his Bagratid predecessors being Davit III of Tao-Klarjeti (930–1001), Davit II, nominal king of Kartli (r. 923–37), and Davit I *kouropalates* (r. 876–81). Davit IV's father Giorgi II, depicted in murals at Ateni as a monk-king, and still prayed for in 1103 as 'king of kings' and 'caesar', took a back seat, living until 1112.[2]

In 1089 only western Georgia was under royal control: when the king first went hunting east of Mt Likhi, the land had to be reconnoitred for fear of marauding Seljüks. Elsewhere, a later chronicler recalls, 'not a soul could be seen in cities and towns'. But in the 1090s, while Davit paid off the Seljüks, Malik Shah refrained from raiding Georgia. The peasants hiding in the forests and mountains drifted back to plough the valleys and rebuild the towns. In 1092 the urbane Seljük vizier Nizam-al-Mulk was assassinated; Malik Shah himself died mysteriously. The Seljüks were in turmoil, the throne disputed, their peasants rebelling; new sects, notably the Ishmailites, vied for dominance. Davit discarded his Byzantine titles, even *panhypersebastos* (universal supreme ruler), and their implied bonds. Free of foreign intrigues, Davit bridled his fractious lords: in 1093 he accused Liparit Baghvash, duke of Kldekari and effectively of all Trialeti, of plotting: Liparit confessed and was forgiven. Two years later, Davit arrested Liparit for treason and in 1097 deported him to Constantinople. Drastic measures

instilled into feudal lords the notion that all land belonged to the crown and that they held their fiefs only if they served the king loyally. The most treacherous feudals expressed penitence with ostentatious piety: various Liparit Baghvashes commissioned translations from St John Chrysostom and endowed Shio-Mghvime monastery.

Davit then created the *mstovarni* (meaning 'informers'), an intelligence service under the minister for internal affairs, the *mandaturukhutsesi*: it defeated the nobility's plots and gave the king a true picture of what was happening in his army and Church. Well advised by counsellors like his tutor Giorgi, bishop of Chqondidi, Davit nipped trouble in the bud. 'Nobody dared speak out even to their spouse . . . for it would certainly come to the king's knowledge . . . nobody ever plotted, everyone was wary about everything,' records the chronicler. Plotters were punished by blinding, castration and execution.

New opportunity came from abroad. In 1095 the First Crusade against Muslims in the Holy Land was announced; by 1097 the crusaders were fighting their way across western Anatolia to capture Damascus (1098) and Jerusalem (1099). This European invasion united all the Middle East's Muslims – Turks, Arabs, Kurds – behind the Seljük sultanates; but the dangers of war on two fronts forced Georgia's Muslim enemies to concentrate on saving Syria and Palestine and to leave Transcaucasia alone. In 1099 Davit stopped paying the Seljüks:[3] the savings were spent rebuilding cities and the army. Davit first made his army loyal to the crown, not to feudal lords, and embarked on well-planned campaigns. He attacked Kakhetia in 1103, repossessing the frontier citadel of Zedazeni[4] that the rebel Kartlian Dzagan had surrendered to Kakhetia: he dispossessed Dzagan Abuletisdze (whose brother, the high priest Modistos, opposed Davit's reforms). (Dzagan sought asylum in the monastery of Shio-Mghvime, but was handed to the king by the abbot, for which the monastery was rewarded by the endowment of a new church.) Conveniently, in the same year Rati Baghvash, Liparit's son, died, and Kldekari, his fortress, and all Trialeti were forfeited to the crown. The fall of the Baghvash and Dzagan families sobered other ambitious Kartlians.

The royal army crossed Kartli unopposed into Kakhetia. King Kvirike IV of Kakhetia was succeeded in 1102 by his inexperienced son Aghsartan II; the Hereti nobles, seeing that Kakhetia and Hereti could gain nothing by resisting, arrested Aghsartan and gave him to Davit. (Aghsartan then disappeared from history.) Some Kakhetian noblemen, however, sought help from the Muslim atabag of Ganja. Davit IV's army, in a brilliant battle at Ertsukhi (in modern-day western Azerbaijan), routed the combined Ganjan and Kakhetian forces: by 1105 Georgia's provinces were reunited. Ertsukhi gave Davit a semi-divine aura: he was at the forefront of the fighting, three horses were killed under him; when he returned to

King Davit IV the Builder, depicted in a fresco at Gelati.

his headquarters and unbuckled his belt a pool of blood gushed out – to the relief of his suite, the blood of Kakhetians and Ganjans he had hacked down. Kakhetia was a valuable prize; Aghsartan I's peace treaty with the Seljüks had shielded Kakhetia from devastation: its agricultural and human resources helped resurrect Georgia's economy, while conquering Hereti gave Davit control of the lucrative shepherds' route to and from Dagestan's mountain pastures.

Even before reclaiming Kakhetia, Davit was reorganizing the state and Church. A crucial measure, of which records survive, was the 1104 Church Synod at Ruisi cathedral and Urbnisi monastery.[5] This synod, which Davit attended as a rank-and-file layman, but in reality conducted, aimed to end abuses in the Church, which, despite Giorgi Mtatsmindeli's reforms in the 1060s, had degenerated into 'a cauldron of robbers'. A study of the synod's

articles shows that Davit was stopping the feudal aristocracy using the Church to gain wealth and power and to defy the crown: aristocrats had been appointing under-age and uneducated offspring as bishops, who in turn ordained unqualified ministers, who sanctioned illicit marriages, indulged in sodomy, and so on. The council not only suppressed these abuses, specifying minimum ages and qualifications for the marriage of minors, the ordination of priests and anointment of bishops, thus greatly 'embittering' many monasteries accustomed to behaving like corrupt republics, but it also established the canon of liturgical books and Church saints, unified Church practice, replaced fractious with compliant clerics, and brought the bishops into a strict hierarchy under the Catholicos and under Davit's chief counsellor, the bishop of Chqondidi. The synod's resolutions were summarised by Arsena the Monk (later of Iqalto), in a memorandum that consisted of an introduction and nineteen articles, the longest and most adamant being the eighteenth denouncing sodomy as the foulest sin, which 'brought down the high reign of the Persians and the eternal reign of the Romans to the level of wild beasts'.

In 1104 Davit united the post of bishop of Chqondidi (a bishopric created in the 920s by King Giorgi of Abkhazia) with that of chief secretary (*mtsignobarukhutsesi*, a post dating from Bagrat IV's day). The first grand vizier or prime minister Giorgi held the post until 1118, and was succeeded by Svimon (until 1141). Davit thus tied Church to crown even more tightly than had Vakhtang Gorgasali or Bagrat IV; bonding the country, he united the eastern bishoprics of Atsquri and Samtavisi with Chqondidi in the west, and subordinated the western bishopric of Khoni to Mtskheta.

To raise the Church's prestige and its debt to the crown, in 1106 Davit founded Gelati monastery, near Kutaisi. Over thirty years Gelati became more than a royal mausoleum: it was an academy, exchanging teachers and students with Constantinople, repatriating from monasteries in Bulgaria, Greece, Jerusalem, Cyprus and Antioch scholars like the theologian and translator Ioane Petritsi, whose erudite writings developed Georgian syntax and philosophy to unprecedented sophistication. (Petritsoni monastery, where Ioane Petritsi had been trained, was founded in 1083 in Bulgaria, near today's Plovdiv, by Grigol Bakuriani of Tao, originally as a mausoleum for Grigol's brother and son. It soon acquired a hospice, three inns, a fishing lake and extensive land holdings: its pride was an innovative seminary preparing Georgian boys for the priesthood: Petritsoni inspired Gelati.) Gelati was praised by the poet Ioane Shavteli as 'a new Rome . . . a Hellas where saints' relicts are interred'. In Kakhetia, the monastic complex of Iqalto, under Davit IV's counsellor Arsena, was Gelati's eastern twin, teaching a Byzantine curriculum: geometry, arithmetic, music, rhetoric, grammar, philosophy and astronomy. These acad-

emies also had an influx of Georgian graduates of the Magnaura Pandidakterion, Constantinople's university.

The crusaders' arrival sent Georgian scholar-monks flooding back home: in the early twelfth century, the Latin kings of Jerusalem began taxing, even confiscating and eventually sacking Orthodox monasteries and churches – Petritsoni was ravaged by crusaders in 1189.

Constant warfare proved, however, incompatible with holding a traditional royal court: a modern ministerial government was set up in Kutaisi. Davit founded a *saajo kari*, or Court of Appeal, to hear important criminal and civil cases that formerly fell in the king's remit. Mondays were allotted for widows, orphans and paupers: these cases were heard by the chief minister, Giorgi of Chqondidi. Other ministers, especially the *mandaturukhutsesi*, heard citizens' petitions on other days.

Throughout the 1100s, relying less on soldiers supplied by feudal lords, Davit improved his army, its core a 5,000-strong royal guard, the *mona spa* ('servile host'). Its first task was to clear Kartli of Turkish garrisons and settlers. The garrison of Samshvilde south of Tbilisi was captured in 1110 by an army led by Giorgi of Chqondidi's nephew Tevdore and by a loyal Kakhetian nobleman, Abuleti, after most garrisons around Tbilisi had been disarmed. Turkic tribesmen who overwintered their horses and cattle in the Kura valley between Tbilisi and Bardavi in Caucasian Albania were expelled; the land was reclaimed for agriculture. This eastward Christian progress, reclaiming castle by castle, continued for another decade, leaving Tbilisi last (in 1116 its inhabitants had to pay an annual tax of 10,000 dinars to the Georgian crown, and Davit stationed within the city a symbolic garrison of ten men under a nominal governor). In 1115 Rustavi, just two hours on horseback from Tbilisi, fell to Davit's army; in 1117 Gishi citadel in Hereti was taken. The next year Georgian forces turned south and captured Lore, the Armenian borderland. Turkish forces gathered on the banks of the Araxes, but were driven back.

Georgia gained territory and, by looting the wealthy Turk-held towns, enriched its treasury. All the Near East suffered a shortage of silver in the twelfth century; even with looted silver, which enabled Byzantine drachmas and ducats as well as Arab dirhams to circulate, Davit shrank his own drachmas from three to less than one gram, and issued copper coinage with the face value of the silver. Despite devaluation, the coins show confidence: they proclaim Davit as king of Kakhetians, Abkhaz, Kartlians, Caucasian Albanians; the only Arabic on the reverse is *ḥusām al-masīḥ*, meaning 'sword of the Messiah'.

At the same time, Davit cemented political alliances by divorce and remarriage and by placing his daughters strategically. Probably in 1106, he secured his eastern borders with the Seljük-dominated, but culturally

Iranian state of Shirvan (the successor state to Caucasian Albania) by marrying his elder daughter Tamar to Shirvan's heir Manuchehr III, who would accede in 1120 and win fame by building Baku. In 1113 Davit found a more prestigious alliance for his younger daughter Kata: renamed Irene, she was sent to Constantinople and married Prince Isaak Comnenus, the emperor's second son: Davit could now boast that he was a family member of the Byzantine imperial house.

By 1109 Davit had a standing army, loyal to the crown, of some 40,000 men, an elite guard of 5,000 highly trained cavalrymen, special troops for garrisoning captured towns, as well as the old forces from feudal lords, and a scattering of mercenaries (including stray crusaders). A once depleted and demoralized force was rearmed, remounted and remotivated: the brave were generously rewarded, cowards were forced to wear women's clothes. Swearing, fooling about and 'devilish' songs were banned. Discipline was ruthless. The army no longer lived on loot, but was properly paid and fed. The *mstovarni* security services supplied military intelligence, too. The army was overseen by the *mandaturukhutsesi* (equivalent to minister of interior), a post held by Vardanisdze and then Orbeli lords who also held the title of *amirspasalari* ('commander-in-chief'). Davit's new army proved itself in 1110, taking from the Turks Samshvilde, a heavily fortified town of great symbolic importance, and then liberating the Kura and Iori valleys. The Seljük sultan responded by amassing an army of 100,000, which Davit, to his own surprise, routed at night with a much smaller force. In 1115 Giorgi of Chqondidi led a force that recaptured Rustavi, cutting Tbilisi off from the east, and getting control of the Black Sea–Caspian trade route. In winter 1116, more by cunning diversions than overwhelming force, Davit defeated the Turks in Tao. The two following years were marked by daring conquests in Javakheti and Lore. But Georgian forces, though highly mobile and well supported with siege machinery, wagons and pack animals, were still too small to cope with a coordinated Muslim onslaught, and the stronger Georgia became, the more likely was an attack by a Muslim coalition.

By distracting the Seljüks, Europe's crusades opened one window of opportunity for Davit; Vladimir Monomakh, grand duke of Kievan Russia, opened another. In 1103 Russia had driven across the Don river the Qipchaqs, Turkic nomads who threatened its duchies, and who now rallied in the north Caucasus, competing for pasture with the Ossetians. In 1118 Davit IV led to the Daryal Pass forces large enough to subdue the Ossetians, and then, with diplomatic skill, he reconciled Qipchaqs and Ossetians, and made the Qipchaqs an unrefusable offer. Forty thousand Qipchaq families were settled in Georgia and granted landholdings and summer and winter pastures, in exchange for supplying the king's army with a man and a horse from each family.

The Qipchaqs were already famous mercenaries: Russian grand dukes had used their services in internecine wars; Arab rulers prized them so highly that their own officers learned Qipchaq; eventually, Qipchaqs served in Hungarian and Egyptian armies, and assimilated with indigenous populations. The Qipchaqs who moved to Georgia went wherever Davit anticipated conflict: east and south to intimidate the Muslim emirates, to Inner Kartli to rein in fractious noblemen. Diplomacy was needed to assure Grand Duke Vladimir Monomakh in Kiev that Davit was removing, not harbouring Kievan Russia's ferocious enemy. Davit and Vladimir Monomakh probably never met, but Georgia must have sent emissaries with assurances to the Russians. The Russian chronicles state that the grand duke of Kiev opened the 'iron gates' (the Daryal Pass) and chased the Qipchaqs out; the Arab historian Paul of Aleppo, who saw Russian documents in the eighteenth century, believed that Russian soldiers helped Davit IV transfer the Qipchaqs.[6]

Davit divorced Queen Rusudan, the Armenian mother of his children, in order to cement his alliance with the Qipchaqs: he then married Gurandukht, daughter of the Qipchak chieftain Otrok (or Atraka). Davit then betrothed his youngest daughter Rusudan to Jadaros, heir to the Ossetian throne, thus securing *pax georgiana* in the north Caucasus.[7] Ex-Queen Rusudan was consigned with attendants and valuable gifts to the protection of King Baudouin I of Jerusalem and to the nunnery of the Holy Cross. The crusaders thought the rejected queen was the widow, not the divorcee, of King Davit; her gift of a silver cross containing a fragment of the True Cross was received with gratitude and sent to the archbishop of Paris, with a garbled explanation:

> Davit, king of the Georgians, who like his predecessors held and guarded the Caspian Gates where Gog and Mog are held back, a task his son still continues, whose land and kingdom is a sort of rampart for us against the Medes and Persians, has always lived with the highest veneration for and delight in this cross. Now that he has died and his son has inherited the kingdom, his widow, more venerable for her piety than her noble origins, has had her head shaven and has put on a nun's habit and, carrying this cross and much gold, has come to Jerusalem with a few people, never to return, but to end her life here in silence, peace and prayer, and has asked that of the gold she has brought some should go to the congregations of the holy city and distributed as alms for the poor and the pilgrims.[8]

(The letter, accompanying the cross, from Praecentor Ansellus (Anseau) of Jerusalem to G (Gerbert or Galoni) archbishop of Paris is usually dated

1108, but in fact the cross arrived in Paris on Sunday, 1 August 1120,[9] dating Rusudan's divorce to 1117–18.)

The Qipchaqs were not at first trusted – only some 16,000 of their potential 40,000 warriors entered the field at one time, but they enabled Davit's army to fight international wars. Eventually the Qipchaqs became Georgian-speaking Christians, but for generations Georgians thought them no better than bandits, as the folk poem *I Came Across a Qipchaq* shows: a man offers a Qipchaq bread, wine and meat, but the Qipchaq grabs the man's wife too, and in the ensuing fight both men die.[10] Moreover, *saqivchaqo*, a tax to pay for this new force, was imposed for the next two centuries.

Davit IV's expedition to the north Caucasus in 1118 had far-ranging consequences: the Ossetians (whose elite was Christian and tied to the Bagrations by previous alliances) accepted Georgian suzerainty, and the Chechens, too, temporarily succumbed to Georgian influence,[11] evidenced by ruined churches all over Chechnya, by Georgian borrowings in Chechen, such as *kira,* 'Sunday' (like the Georgian, derived from the Greek for the Lord's day), and by today's 2,000 Batsbi (also known as Tsova–Tush) people in northeast Georgia, Chechens whose culture and language owe much to Christianity and the Georgian language.

Another foreign campaign loomed. Davit's counsellor, Giorgi of Chqondidi, died in 1118; Davit replaced Giorgi with Svimon, whose sweeping powers are shown by his appointment as bishop of Bedia in Abkhazia and Alaverdi in Kakhetia. Davit's army, reinforced by Qipchaqs and several hundred 'Franks' – crusaders released from Saracen captivity, or who chose not to return to Europe – was now a threat that his neighbours had to counter. In 1120 and 1121 Davit's army ranged from one end of the country to the other – from Bichvinta on the Black Sea to Shirvan and Bardavi – now annexing non-Georgian territory. Tbilisi, still an independent emirate, felt doomed. Its Muslim citizens offered the city to Najm ad-Din Ilghazi, ruler of the formerly Armenian province of Mayafariqin (on the upper Tigris): Najm ad-Din at first refused, fearing Davit's retribution. Then the merchants of Tbilisi and Ganja jointly appealed to the Seljük sultan: an anti-Georgian coalition under the Seljük sultan and his brother Tughrul of Nakhichevan, under Najm ad-Din Ilghazi's command, was formed. They recruited Davit IV's own son-in-law, Manuchehr III of Shirvan, who was alarmed by the king's encroachment on his own territory.

In August 1121 Davit's army, probably 56,000 men, including 16,000 Qipchaqs and some ex-crusaders, camped at Didgori, in the Nichabi gorge 40 kilometres west of Tbilisi. In what both sides proclaimed a Holy War, the Georgians faced an army, largely Seljük, at least three, possibly five times larger. Davit kept his main army in the gorge, sending his son and heir Demetre's men to the heights to encircle the enemy. Two acts of utter

ruthlessness ensured Davit's victory. First, he blocked the gorge with trees and boulders to stop his own men retreating. Second, he sent to Seljük headquarters 200 heavily armed cavalrymen pretending to be deserters. As soon as the Seljüks received these men, the latter began to massacre the Muslim leaders, demoralizing their whole army. Final victory was brought by heavy cavalry, 200 of them Franks. The battle of Didgori of 12 August 1121 lasted just three hours, but destroyed Muslim hegemony over Georgia and Armenia. Davit's last three and a half years built on this victory. Georgia became an unassailable Christian kingdom, ruling for a century from the Black Sea to the Caspian, from the north Caucasian steppes to eastern Anatolia.

In 1122–3 Tbilisi was reintegrated, with some bloodshed, as Georgia's capital: after three days' looting of the Muslim north bank, the city became tolerant and multi-confessional, with taxation favouring non-Christians. The city was governed by a *shihna* ('viceroy') instead of its council of elders, and its taxation set at 10,000 dinars. Muslim citizens paid annually three dinars, Jews four, and Georgians five. (Among other concessions to Muslims, slaughtering pigs in Tbilisi was forbidden.[12])

In 1123, despite a skirmish between Georgian and Qipchaq soldiers on the outskirts of the capital, Shemakha, Davit captured the emirate of Shirvan: the western half (substantially Christian) was annexed by Georgia, to be governed by Svimon of Bedia and Alaverdi, while Manuchehr and Davit's daughter Tamar were given eastern Shirvan to rule. In April 1124 Davit reached the Caspian and took the port of Derbent. Later that year, the Armenian citizens of Ani invited Davit IV to rule them. Davit's 60,000-strong army took Ani after a three-day siege; the Muslim ruler and his son were deported; and Davit's General Abuleti and his son Ivane Abuletisdze were put in charge. Davit IV was proclaimed Armenia's liberator (his emblems now named him king of the Armenians as well as of all Georgia), the man who restored the grand mosque of Ani as a Christian cathedral. The acquisition of so many disputed vassal states around Georgia's borders led Davit IV to introduce a new military and aristocratic rank, *monapire*, 'borderman': like Germanic margraves, the *monapire* guarded frontiers, reconnoitred neighbouring hostile territory, and supplied tribute and intelligence to the monarch. In return, the *monapire* acquired feudal rights, and even bequeathed his rank to his sons.

In this period, Davit chaired a Church synod which attempted to reconcile the Armenian monophysite and Georgian dyophysite faiths. The Georgian Catholicos Ioane, and distinguished theologians like Arsena of Iqalto, who had attended the Ruisi–Urbnisi Synod, led a nine-hour debate: predictably, there was no union of the two Churches, especially as Arsena had translated many anti-monophysite tracts, but in parts of Armenia under Georgian rule a period of tolerance ensued.

According to Ioane Batonishvili's early nineteenth-century *Alms-Gathering*, a miscellany of fact and fiction based on material now lost, but then accessible to the Bagratids, King Baudouin II of Jerusalem, disguised as a dervish, visited Davit IV. The story seems far-fetched, but in 1117 the future Baudouin II was at Gargar in Lore, a part of Armenia liberated by the Georgians: a journey to the Armenian capital of Dvin to meet Davit IV is plausible.[13] News of Davit's victorious battles reached Jerusalem just before the conquests of the first crusaders were endangered by a Muslim resurgence: to western chroniclers, the Georgian king incarnated the legendary priest-king Prester John who would come from the east to save Christendom.

Davit left just one conquest for his successors: Ganja, the Muslim commercial and cultural centre to the southeast. Davit's conquests had one great political consequence: at last, there was one word, 'Sakartvelo', which applied to the whole of Georgia, uniting the land in name as well as in fact. Davit's heritage went beyond mere politics: Georgia was culturally transformed. The emirate of Shirvan, from a fusion of Caucasian Albanians, Arabs and Turks with indigenous Iranians, had become a flourishing centre of Persian culture.[14] The modern Persian language was written in Arabic script: literacy was no longer the arcane preserve of magi. Persia had waned as a political force, but newly emerging Turco-Iranian-Arab states produced a torrent of Persian poetry and prose. Shirvan, when Davit conquered it, was the city of the poet Khaqani; neighbouring Ganja produced many poets, culminating in a genius, Nizam of Ganja. Strict Sunni Islam yielded to Isma'ilite and Sufic tolerance. The vizier of the Seljük sultan Malik Shah, Nizam al-Mulk, was the author of a brilliant treatise on government. Before 1100 Georgian literature was Byzantine and ecclesiastic: acquiring Shirvan exposed Georgia to a secular culture of lyrics and epics – philosophical, mystic, heroic and romantic. Persia once again supplanted Greece, now in the cultural, not political sphere. The influence was mutual: Muslim rulers, notably of Shirvan, now addressed the Georgian ruler with elaborate respect as 'King of the Abkhaz, Ossetians and Russians': the poet Khaqani claims, 'I became a speaker of Georgian.'[15] Georgian religious literature remained Byzantine, but contact with oriental culture revitalized even Orthodoxy; the Buddhist legend of *Lalita-Vistara,* transformed into a Christian tale of *Balahvar and Josaphat*, passed through Arabic into Georgian, before spreading westwards. Translations from Persian generated imitations and then original works that glorified the reign of Davit IV's great-granddaughter, Tamar. Paradoxically, the courtly values of Persian poetry aligned Georgian culture closer to the crusaders' world of knights and troubadours than anything in Byzantium's rigidly anti-secular culture.

The Georgian language changed: in the eleventh century not only had old Georgian verb tenses and prefixes shifted, but, under Shirvan's

influence, Persian vocabulary also flooded the language, whereas Arab and Turkish invasions left a fainter mark on Georgian. Like English with Anglo-Saxon and Norman French layers, so Georgian was enriched with synonyms from foreign and native sources. The shift of the Georgian capital from monoglot Kutaisi to cosmopolitan Tbilisi, from the Church to a secular court, stimulated rich aristocrats' appetite for courtly literature. Meanwhile, the old alphabet gave way, for secular purposes, to a new *mkhedruli* 'cavalryman's' cursive alphabet, better suited to pen, paper and the impatience of soldiers and courtiers than the monumental *asomtavruli*, designed for chiselling in stone. The earliest example of the new script is in Davit's own hand.

Davit IV took his library with him on campaigns, and was fascinated by theology, astrology and history, of which, his chronicler said, 'he knew the deeds better than any other king'. He apparently read the Qu'ran, as well as Persian poetry in the original. Aiming as high in poetry as he did in politics, Davit set a benchmark for future Bagratid kings. Of his work eleven psalm-like *Hymns of Repentance* survive. He identified with his namesake and reputed ancestor, the biblical king David, whose reign was founded on mortal sins. We should not, perhaps, read specific biographical information (for example, guilt at ousting his own father)[16] into these *Hymns*, but they prove that Davit was a poet with self-critical insight, for example:

> Cain's murderous act,
> The defilement of the sons of Seth,
> The wild drives of warriors
> The filth of the blasphemy of the five cities
> I multiplied still further,
> Like some upward rising
> River of corruption.
> The Egyptians' hard-heartedness,
> The habits of the Canaanites,
> Sacrificing victims, soothsaying, sorcery,
> With locks of hair and other things, which
> You told us not to imitate,
> I followed still more wildly than their first practitioners.
> . . . sinners of whom the first,
> The average, and the last
> I am, like a bottomless
> Vessel brimming with filth.

Once the *Hymns of Repentance* addresses Davit's political career: 'Viciously I crossed frontiers and united [royal] house to house, lands to lands, and I deprived the weakest of their portion.'[17]

Davit foresaw his early death. He died on 24 January 1125 and was buried at Gelati, the cathedral, monastery and seminary he had founded and which was still under construction: the king ordered his body to be buried under the threshold, so that every visitor would step over it. He left two *anderdzi* (last testaments): an extensive one in 1124, at the urging of his confessor, Arsen of Iqalto, to the monastery of Shio-Mghvime, to which he awarded lands confiscated from rebels, and dictated his commemoration in church services;[18] the other is a shorter, controversial will of 1125, in which Davit boasts of leaving a realm stretching from Nikopsia (today's Tuapse) to Derbent, from Ossetia to Speri and Mt Aragats (between Ani and Erevan), and praises his son and heir Demetre as his greatest blessing from God: 'in wisdom, in purity, in bravery and magnanimity better than myself'. But the testament makes an unexpected disposition for the succession to the throne: 'And I enjoin my children and my queens, too, with the intercession of God, that [Demetre] should bring up his brother and, if God wills it and, should he be in any way worthy, then afterwards let him be king over his patrimony. And let his sisters, as my beloved children, pay him respect' [the word for 'in any way', *tsuat'a*, is a variant of the adverb *tsot'a*, but is read by some historians as Tsuat'a, a pet-name for Vakhtang, his infant son by Gurandukht].

This second testament, of which only a nineteenth-century copy survives, may be a treasonable forgery: the condition 'should he be worthy' has no place in the succession of a divinely anointed monarch; the notion that the heir to the throne should be regent for his infant brother, or that the throne should pass from elder son to the latter's brother, not to his own son, contradicts everything done by Davit and his predecessors to ensure an indisputable succession. Perhaps the Qipchaq Gurandukht, Davit's second queen, and her supporters interpolated this provision to ensure that Gurandukht's half-Qipchaq infant son inherited the throne. (Vakhtang was only six when his father died, and Gurandukht had an even younger daughter, Tamar junior, later married, like her elder half-sister, into the Ossetian royal family.) Unwittingly or not, Davit left a time bomb that his son and grandson had difficulty defusing. A cryptic epigraph by Arsena of Iqalto, who gave Davit IV 'hope and guidance' for thirty years, was carved in stone at Gelati in 1127. Despite erosion it still reads:

> He who at Nacharmagevi castle united for our sustenance
> seven kings,
> Who chased over our borders Turks, Persians, Arabs,
> Who brought us fish from the waters over the mountains to
> the waters on this side,
> The man who achieved those things now has me placing his
> arms across his heart.

Davit composed a simpler epitaph for his tombstone: 'This is my resting place from one eternity to another. This is what I desire, and here I have settled.'

7
Demetre and Giorgi III

✠

Demetre I acceded in 1125, at the age of 28, somewhat disadvantaged: his father had died without crowning him in front of the senior clerics and feudal lords; one version of his father's testament implied that Demetre was only his younger brother's regent. While Davit IV's conquests had ensured an integrated and well-defended Georgian realm, they gave his successor a battlefront with neighbouring Muslim powers that stretched from the Black Sea, through central Armenia and Azerbaijan to the Caspian, straining even the mobile Georgian army. Davit bequeathed Demetre 'my noble standard, my royal armour and my heavenly and earthly treasures', but the new king's enemies decided to strike before he could consolidate his position. In 1125 Demetre had to fight the Seljüks for Dmanisi citadel, which protected Tbilisi from the south (it would be lost and retaken in the early 1130s); but he captured Khunani, halfway to Ganja, and thus made Trialeti's mountains a barrier against invasion.

Shirvan, too, although ruled by Demetre's brother-in-law, rebelled from 1126: the Seljüks supported Manuchehr III and his Muslim populace, who wanted to restore an independent emirate. Here, with his sister's help, Demetre reached a compromise. In 1129–30 Shirvan was split into two, the border being the Tetri Tsqali (Aksu) river: the northwest, and partly Christian half, was incorporated into Georgia, while Manuchehr was recog - nized as the emir of the eastern half, his independence limited by an obligation to pay taxes and to supply Demetre in wartime with 'as many thousands of men as needed'. Eventually, this benefited the emir of Shirvan, since he received Georgian protection from rivals like the emirate of Derbent. Derbent, too, was secured as a vassal, though more loosely, by the marriage of Demetre's daughter (her name is unknown) to Emir Abu al-Muzaffar. (Derbent was trusted by Demetre: all his reign he kept an important prisoner of war from Didgori in Derbent's citadel.) Demetre's Georgia, like the Shirvan emirate, practised religious tolerance: Demetre

visited mosques; employed as secretary Ibn al-Azraq, the author of the Mayyafariqin chronicle; his coins were inscribed in Arabic; and he granted Tbilisi's Muslims tax exemptions and religious privileges.

The most intractable problem for Demetre and his successor Giorgi III was retaining the Armenian capital of Ani. While Armenian Christians welcomed liberation from Muslim rule, many nobles, Armenian and Georgian, feared losing their autonomy and sought better terms as Muslim vassals. Almost immediately, Demetre felt it expedient to release Abulsuar, the Muslim governor whom Davit had imprisoned; in 1126 Abulsuar's son Fadl returned from exile in distant Khorasan, swearing an insincere oath of loyalty, to take the governorship of Ani from the Georgians Abuleti and his son Ivane. Why did Abuleti and his son, with or without Demetre's consent, but with the connivance of Ani's elders, surrender Ani to Fadl so easily? Armenian historians comment that Abuleti wanted first to save his own skin, and then the skins of his family and fellow Christians. Events a few years later suggest that Ivane Abuletisdze was plotting to subvert, even overthrow Demetre.

In 1130 Nasir ad-Din Sukman, sultan of Khlat (today's Ahlat on Lake Van), the capital of Shah-Armenia, began a series of attempts to oust Georgians from northern and central Armenia that would last for over thirty years. Fadl, too, was expanding his empire, capturing Dvin and then Ganja. Demetre had to come to terms with this energetic invader: they agreed that Ani's cathedral would remain a Christian site, and that Demetre could 'protect' the city's Christians – a tense stand-off that lasted two decades, until a mightier Muslim ruler, Emir Saldukh of Erzurum, captured Ani.

After Fadl's takeover, Abuleti and his son fled to Dmanisi. The reason for their flight soon transpired. In 1131 Abuleti learned that his son Ivane was plotting with the thirteen-year-old pretender, Vakhtang, to kill Demetre. Abuleti denounced his son, but both were kept incarcerated in Dmanisi until all three men could be tried. The king's court acquitted Abuleti and, surprisingly, because generations of the Abuleti family had alternated loyalty with treason, pretended to pardon Ivane Abuletisdze, who was appointed army commander at Garni, near Erevan: here Ivane was discreetly beheaded on Demetre's orders. Ivane's son, Tirkashi, fled to Muslim-ruled Shah-Armenia, where, as governor of Arsharunik province, he waited over twenty years for the political climate to change. Demetre showed his half-brother Vakhtang no mercy: Vakhtang had his eyes gouged out, an operation which led to his death at the age of 20 in 1138.

Demetre could breathe easily for only a few years. In 1137 a powerful state appeared on his borders: Shams ad-Din Eldigüz (by origin a Qipchaq slave who married Sultan Tughrul's widow)[1] founded a dynasty that ruled southern Azerbaijan and much of northwest Iran, annexing

territory that had once been Caucasian Albania. Demetre was saved by the earthquake of 1139 which shattered Caucasian Albania, destroying Ganja, killing over 20,000:[2] Demetre immediately invaded, lifted Ganja's iron gates from their hinges and carted them off to Gelati monastery, where he inscribed them with a proclamation of his victory: 'I, King Demetre, have smashed Caucasian Albania and taken these gates for ever.'

The Seljük sultan and the atabag of Azerbaijan revenged this insult in 1143 by trying to retake Ganja. Demetre won the battle, but lost the peace: he offered his daughter Rusudan to the sultan Mas'ud Temirek, Seljük ruler of Mosul, including Ganja in her dowry. (Mas'ud died in October 1152; Rusudan then became the last wife of Sultan Hiyas ad-Din Sanjar Shah of Khorasan, who died in 1157, enabling Rusudan, childless, to return to Georgia and give her brother Giorgi III and her niece Tamar the benefit of her experience.) In 1154, towards the end of his reign, Demetre married off, less successfully, his last daughter, whose name is unrecorded, to Iziaslav Mstislovavich, prince of Vladimir in Volynia, and grandson of Grand Duke Vladimir Monomakh. Iziaslav died shortly after the honeymoon: no political alliance between Georgia and Kievan Russia was forthcoming. Demetre played his three daughters as pawns: at least one, in a cleverly played game, turned into an influential queen.

In the 1140s, Georgian lords realized that Demetre had quarrelled with his elder son Davit and had chosen his younger son, Giorgi, as heir. Why they quarrelled is unknown: perhaps over Davit's personal defects; probably, over the Abuleti family and the status of the city of Ani. Those who had supported Demetre's younger brother Vakhtang now opposed Demetre's unprecedented disinheriting of Davit and approved the surrender of Ani to Muslim rule. The new rebellion was furtive – Demetre used Davit IV's intelligence service, the *mstovarni* – and did not surface until 1155.

Again, Ani provoked war. The Arab historian al-Farik (who was at Demetre's court in 1154–5) records that in 1153–4 Fakhr ad-Din Shaddad, Ani's ruler, broke his oath of loyalty and invited Saldukh, emir of Erzurum, to take the city under his wing, for Erzurum would tax the city less heavily than Tbilisi. Demetre was only a day's march away when he learned of this invitation: he immediately sent an army to Ani: the emir of Erzurum was captured, taken to Tbilisi, but, inexplicably, released for a ransom of 100,000 dinars. The noblemen, including a certain Vasak and his brother, who negotiated the emir's release, were active supporters of the heir Davit against his father. Ani's clergy and elders remained discontented: a year later, they deposed Fakhr ad-Din and made his brother Fadl governor of the city.

The rebels struck in late 1155: Demetre was forcibly ordained as a monk, and Davit V took the throne. First, he rewarded his supporters by

inviting Tirkashi (grandson of Abuleti) back from exile and appointing him commander-in-chief (*amirspasalari*). Tirkashi's promotion upset two rebels, the brothers Sumbat and Ivane Orbeli. Davit V died suddenly six months later, poisoned by the Orbeli brothers, on behalf either of the former king Demetre (who was said to be praying for his elder son's death), or of Davit's younger brother Giorgi. The deed was murky, and the documents dubious. According to precedence and law, on Davit's death his young son Demna should have inherited the throne. One account has Demetre quitting his monastery on Davit's death in order to crown his surviving son Giorgi as king; others allege that Demetre had also died a violent death, and that Giorgi III then seized the throne illicitly. Armenian accounts look favourably on Davit V and assume that Giorgi was appointed by his dying brother Davit as regent to the infant Demna, an unlikely step, given the brothers' antagonism. Demetre in fact returned to the monastery of Davit Garesja, under the name of Damiane, and composed hymns, the most notable being the extraordinarily beautiful hymn to the Virgin, 'Thou art the vineyard, The tender shoot planted in Eden, The fragrant aloe come from heaven . . . '. No more is heard of Demetre / Damiane after 1156, except for a Persian ode on his death, composed in a Shirvan prison cell by Feleki ('the heavenly') of Shirvan (who died in 1160), and a painting of 1194 showing him in monk's robes. (Demetre died at the same time as his sister Tamar, abbess of Tighva.)

When Giorgi III acceded in 1156, by murder or by entitlement, he had married a strikingly beautiful Burdukhan, daughter of the Ossetian king Khuddan. But for some years they were childless, and even then produced no male heir. (Their two daughters, Tamar and Rusudan, were educated at the court of Giorgi's widowed sister Rusudan.) Giorgi III was thus undermined by the existence of his nephew, the pretender Demna, and by aristocrats' eagerness to reassert their lost rights. They took twenty years to mount a *coup d'ĕtat*. Giorgi immediately repressed Davit V's supporters: Vasak, who had helped Emir Saldukh of Erzurum to escape, and then sided with Davit V, fled to Erzurum with his brother; there a grateful Saldukh gave him command of an army that marched on Georgia. The Orbeli brothers, who had murdered Davit V, were aggrieved at not being promoted (Ivane Orbeli was already commander-in-chief), and joined the plotters. The young Demna seemed no threat once he was removed from Tbilisi to be brought up by Ivane Orbeli, whose ambitions now seemed chastened; on reaching his majority, Demna married Ivane Orbeli's daughter, which would bar him from inheriting the throne, since Georgian kings traditionally took brides from foreign royal houses, to avoid making feudal families too arrogant or too envious by ties with the royal house.

With rebellion simmering underground, Giorgi III concentrated on military glory. Vasak had recaptured Ani on Giorgi's behalf before flee-

ing. Ignoring threats from the emir of Erzurum, in 1160 Giorgi provocatively demanded tax arrears from the emir of Ganja and instructed the defaulter to bring the money personally. The emir of Ganja replied that he was bringing an army to besiege Tbilisi: Giorgi lost both the battle and the tax arrears. The following year Ani was again in crisis: Giorgi had appointed as governor Sadun, a man he thought loyal. No sooner was Sadun installed than he fortified the city, and Giorgi had him arrested and executed. The city then came under the joint command of Ivane Orbeli (the foster-father and soon to be the father-in-law of the pretender) and of a scion of a powerful half-Armenian, half-Georgian family, Sargis Mkhargrdzeli ('long-shoulder'), who now became *amirspasalari* of the army and *mandaturukhutsesi* (interior minister) of the state.

The next year, 1162, Giorgi had to assemble a coalition, under his chief minister, his master of the horse and a few trusted nobles, to repel Turks from Diyarbekir, Erzurum and Khlat. An extraordinary and bloody victory over a much larger force[3] enabled Giorgi to release Ani's citizens, Christian and Muslim, imprisoned by the Seljüks, and to give the city the proceeds of looting in order to rebuild churches and palaces. Giorgi also succeeded in deterring Shams ad-Din Eldigüz's Azeri forces from attacking his vassal Shirvan, but in winter 1163 Eldigüz turned west and, collaborating with forces from Erzurum, devastated the Armenian fort of Gagi and, aiming for Ani, laid waste to northern Armenia. In revenge, Giorgi attacked Erzurum: once again, Saldukh was captured; this time he was released when his sister Shah-Banwar, wife of the ruler of Khlat, sent Giorgi III a very expensive present. Two years later, the Muslim armies were repulsed, and all Azerbaijan northwest of Ganja was again in Georgian hands. Ani, however, was still disputed: Eldigüz proposed a compromise to which Giorgi agreed, and in 1165 Ani became formally a Georgian vassal, under Mahmud of the Eldigüz family. Further north, in 1167 (or, other sources state, 1173), the emir of Derbent, despite his vassal status, assembled a heterogeneous army of Alans, Khazars, turncoat Qipchaqs and Russians and attacked Shirvan, then ruled by Giorgi III's cousin Aghsartan I. Shirvan requested help: as a result Derbent was severely punished by the Georgian armies, while Shirvan was compensated with territory seized from Derbent's emir: Aghsartan's rule now extended to the shores of the Caspian.[4] In this war, Manuel Comnenus, father of the future emperor of Trebizond, (with his wife Rusudan, Giorgi's daughter, he had been a guest of the king at Tbilisi) distinguished himself by heroic fighting.

As the chronicler put it, Giorgi III could now 'reign in joy, relaxing and hunting', but his decade of victories exhausted Georgia's manpower and economy and exacerbated discontent. Giorgi also had to reinstate taxation on the Church's landholdings and thus risk alienating the most powerful force outside the feudal aristocracy. But military victories made

Giorgi III almost as renowned as his grandfather, Davit the Builder. Khaqani, court poet of Shirvan, who composed panegyrics as well as philosophical lyrics, celebrated Giorgi in Persian verse as 'a new Augustus . . . greater than Heracles . . . with no peer in the world . . . supreme defender of the Cross . . . sword of the Messiah . . . reincarnation of Christ'.

In the 1170s Giorgi III had fewer foreign wars. Georgian generals, however, declared themselves unwilling to 'abstain from warring and pillage': they turned to ethnic cleansing, driving the last Turkic nomads off pastures in Tao and the Kura valley. In summer 1172 Giorgi went back to war: he took Dvin, the Armenian Church capital, looted it, but left it in the hands of Anania, a local lord. Finally, in 1174, Ani was freed: the shah of Muslim Armenia was imprisoned and Ivane Orbeli put back in charge.

Ivane Orbeli showed his true colours: the following year, seeking more pay and respect from the Turks, he prepared to surrender Ani to Eldigüz and Sultan Arslan, and was stopped only by Ani's citizenry and clergy. The bishop of Ani, Basegh, stayed loyal to Giorgi III, who rewarded him by ransoming his brother, Prince Apirat, from the Turks and appointing Apirat emir of Ani. Emir Arslan was taken prisoner, and Ani became indisputably Georgian. Eldigüz's and Sultan Arslan's last effort, with forces from Azerbaijan and Hamadan, was to invade north Armenia in 1175, but they were repelled from Lore and Dmanisi and fell back to Dvin, which they held for the rest of the century.

The late 1170s left the Georgians so exhausted that war was limited to skirmishes in western Tao-Klarjeti, clawing back, with Armenian soldiers, what Davit of Tao had surrendered to the Byzantines and was still in Seljük hands. Despite decades of warfare, Georgian literature flourished: major prose works, like the courtly epic *Amirdarejaniani*, were composed, and Fakhr al-Din al Gurgani's *Vis and Ramin* (a prototype of *Romeo and Juliet*) was translated into Georgian. The kingdom found time to attend to acute internal problems. Around 1170 a severe law against banditry and theft was passed. For the first time, crimes against property and the person (as opposed to crimes against the state) were atoned for not by blood-money, but by statutory punishment. A police force of 'thief-seekers' was instituted, parallel to the state's intelligence service. At the end of the 1170s, when banditry was still rife, it was decreed that thieves and bandits were to be hanged from trees, and their loot, if found, hung next to them. Torture, except for blinding and castrating traitors, was rare in Georgia; beheading was a last resort, when exile and excommunication failed to deter treason, and executioners were always non-Georgians. But hanging, as a draconian measure against banditry, remained in force for a century, even in Queen Tamar's humane reign.

In 1177 Ivane Orbeli made his bid to put Demna (despite the latter's morganatic marriage) on the throne: the pretender was now 21 years old.

Orbeli's price was apparently the kingship of Lore, then the fief of the army's commander-in-chief. Although Orbeli had lost the governorship of Ani, he was still commander-in-chief. Orbeli sought Muslim support, and had many noblemen, such as Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, and even ministers, like the royal stable-keeper, on his side. The conspirators assembled at Kojori, on a mountain 12 miles southwest of Tbilisi, intending at night to snatch Giorgi who was worshipping at a nearby iconostas. Ivane Orbeli meant to kill Giorgi, but told his fellow conspirators that Giorgi would merely be presented with the fait accompli of Demna's enthronement. A child overheard the conversation: Giorgi was tipped off and galloped down to Tbilisi, where he summoned Qubasari, head of the Qipchaq standing army, who provided 500 loyal men. The conspirators, despite having 30,000 men, fell back in disarray to Lore; some, notably Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, switched sides, particularly when promised ministerial posts held by the Orbeli brothers; others sent a mission, including the royal stable-keeper, to the shah of Armenia and Mahmud, Eldigüz ruler of Azerbaijan, asking for help. The Muslims were tempted, but preferred not to risk antagonizing Giorgi. The remaining rebels withstood a siege of several months in Lore, and then proposed terms to the king: the kingdom would be split in two, and Demna and Giorgi would each reign in their own half. Giorgi naturally rejected this absurdity. Letters attached to arrows were exchanged: Giorgi invited Ivane Orbeli to come out and bring Demna, 'the cause of your and many others' evildoing'; Orbeli replied that he could not break his oath 'just for the sake of a few days' [royal] respect.' Giorgi's forces (now including Lezgians and other highlanders) then erected scaffolding, stormed Lore and overwhelmed the rebels. Ivane Orbeli managed to smuggle his personal valuables to Samshvilde, and one of his brothers (Liparit) and two nephews out to the protection of the Eldigüz family (one nephew remained in Iran, another, Ivane, was forgiven, reclaimed his landholdings under Tamar and continued the Orbeli dynasty in Georgia), but the other Orbelis were trapped. Demna came out of the castle, a rope round his neck to signify submission, and pleaded for his life.

A parchment fragment records Giorgi's decree,[5] beginning:

> In the 21st year of my reign, by devilish lobbying and plotting certain lords and gentry of our realm conspired and used our nephew against us and caused us much grief and ordeal. But [God's] great mercy and omniscience undid their actions and spoiled their plot and conspiracy and dissipated all their efforts: some fell in Persia, some died or sought asylum, some were felled under our feet in our kingdom.

Giorgi sentenced his nephew Demna to blinding and castration: the operation killed Demna. Ivane Orbeli had his eyes gouged out; other Orbeli brothers, including Kavtar the royal stable-keeper, were put to death. The name Orbeli was declared accursed and unmentionable. In conjunction with his council (the *darbazi*), Giorgi sentenced other rebels to exile and excommunication, depriving them of lands and army posts. The Qipchaq Qubasari was given Orbeli lands and made *amirspasalari*. In this repression of the old aristocracy other unprecedented promotions, for instance, of a serf Apridon to grand duke of Kartli, were announced.

Giorgi had asserted his authority, but made one major concession. At a full synod, to which every bishop and abbot was summoned, the staunchly loyal Church, which asserted that it had always prayed for the king, was once more exempted from all taxation on its landholdings, a move which Giorgi presented as his voluntary contribution to a deserving cause. His decree celebrating the defeat of the Orbeli rebellion ends: 'Let all our kingdom's monks and bishops, from the west and the east, the Catholicos, the chief chaplain and all hermits, tell us and explain to us the troubles of the Church and of corruption of cases of justice.'

Taught a severe lesson by his own troublesome accession and near overthrow by rebels, Giorgi III now solved the quandary of having no male heir by his queen, Burdukhan. Giorgi III crowned as co-monarch his elder daughter Tamar (his younger daughter, Rusudan, married to Manuel Comnenus, would give birth to the first emperor of Trebizond). In 1178, at the ancient citadel of Uplistsikhe, before all the senior clerics and aristocrats, to ensure an undisputed transition on his death, Tamar received the crown and the girdle from her father's hands. For the first time in 60 years the succession seemed assured.

In 1179 Giorgi turned his attention to civil disorder and summoned a legislative assembly: once again, thieves, regardless of their class, and their loot were hanged from trees and, according to the chroniclers, stray dogs and rats were exterminated.[6]

Queen Tamar of Georgia (1184–1213).

8
Queen Tamar

✠

The six years after 1178, when Tamar was crowned by her father Giorgi III, were uneventful (or sparsely recorded). In the early 1180s the greatest literature of the Golden Age may have been composed. Certainly, Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, which opens with King Rostevan crowning his daughter Tinatin ('a lion cub is just as good, whether male or female') reflects Tamar's coronation of 1178, as well as Georgia's confidence, Persian cultural orientation and newly found chivalric values.

Giorgi III died in Kakhetia on Easter Saturday 1184. The patriarch, however, informed Giorgi's sister Rusudan in Samshvilde first, before bringing the news to Tamar in Tbilisi. The palace was still draped in black when the king's death precipitated confrontation between resentful feudal aristocrats and Georgia's first queen in her own right and her loyal followers. The Church's and nobility's first demand was reasonable: Tamar must be reanointed, this time in Kutaisi, receiving her crown from Anton Saghirisdze, bishop of Kutaisi, and her sceptre and sword from western lords, Kakhaber, duke of Racha, and Vardan Amaneli. Tamar's grandfather Demetre I was likewise crowned a second time in 1125, even though Davit IV (as a fresco at Matskhvarishi shows) had previously girdled him with a sword, as Giorgi had girdled Tamar. Tamar submitted to this ceremony, although she probably then devised a future coronation ceremony, in which God and previous monarchs, not the nobility, bestowed the crown on the monarch.

A deputation of nobles next insisted that Tamar annul Giorgi III's promotions of persons of low birth or non-Georgian origin. She did as she was bid: the former serf Apridon lost both his post and his landholdings as *msakhurtukhutsesi* (chancellor); the Qipchaq general Qubasari (who was in any case incapacitated by a stroke) lost his posts as commander-in-chief (*amirspasalari*), but kept his fief.

Emboldened by victory, with two major posts vacant, nobles now demanded that next to the royal palace at Isani (outside Tbilisi) a *karavi*

(House of Lords, literally 'tent') be set up, and its members be given the sole right to appoint ministers and to enact laws, which would then go, as a formality, for royal assent. The leading rebel was the royal treasurer (*mechurchletukhutsesi*) Qutlu Arslan:[1] the name is Turkic ('Lucky Lion'), but he belonged to the aristocratic western Jaqeli family, his Turkic name perhaps bestowed by a Seljük nanny – otherwise, he could not have led an exclusively Georgian faction. Nor could Qutlu literally have been the *bichi* ('bastard') or 'mule' that Tamar's infatuated historian calls him. But Qutlu Arslan was no Georgian Simon de Montfort, nor was his faction seeking a Magna Carta from an autocrat. The rebels sought stronger powers from a supposedly weak queen: Qutlu Arslan wanted to be *amirspasalari*. Tamar's historian condemns the rebellion as 'in the Persian mode': perhaps the feudal lords felt Tamar should follow the *Siyaset-Nameh* ('The Book of Administration') of Nizam-al-Mulk (vizier to Malik Shah), and never take decisions without her ministers' approval.

Tamar had Qutlu arrested. The rebels threatened violence if Qutlu was not released. The queen then sent two women, Khuashak Tsokali, the mother of the duke of Kartli, and Krava Jaqeli, to parley, dragging out negotiations so that Tamar could prepare an armed response. Khuashak and Krava offered to pardon every penitent rebel, except Qutlu Arslan. The rebels could not agree on a response, and surrendered. What they achieved, or what Tamar conceded, is unclear: Qutlu was eventually pardoned, but left public life. Some of Qutlu's allies (who took part in later rebellions) received ministerial posts, but no 'House of Lords' was set up, and Tamar treated her council (*darbazi*) no more deferentially than had earlier Georgian monarchs.

The main obstacle to Tamar's rule was the elderly Catholicos-patriarch Mikel Marianisdze. He had engineered the early retirement of his predecessor, Nikoloz Gulaberisdze, who after serving from 1150 to 1178, had gone as an envoy from Giorgi and Tamar, rather than as a pilgrim, first to develop the Iberian monastery on Mt Athos, secondly to buy back from Baudouin IV, the Latin king of Jerusalem, the Georgian monastery of the Holy Cross's vineyards and landholdings, which the crusaders had confiscated, and thirdly to stop the Latins taxing and obstructing monks and pilgrims. Mikel, bishop of Samtavisi and Atsquri in Kartli, wielded enormous power, and, by ousting the much-respected Anton Glonistavisdze, had also become bishop of Chqondidi and thus *mtsignobarukhutsesi,* or prime minister. Anton was packed off to Davit Garesja monastery; then Kakhaberisdze, a Racha aristocrat, a descendant of the notorious Baghvash, was hired to kill Anton Glonistavisdze's two brothers.

In 1185 Tamar tried her great-grandfather Davit's stratagem: she summoned a great synod to silence clerical opposition. Catholicos Mikel was excluded from the synod; Nikoloz Gulaberisdze was recalled from

Jerusalem to manage the proceedings, together with the bishop of Kutaisi (who also disliked Mikel). Tamar opened the synod's discussions. But the synod felt it had no right to overthrow the patriarch, let alone dismiss the monarch's chief minister: Mikel kept all his powers. Tamar only succeeded in replacing some hostile bishops with her supporters.

Tamar's final battle with the court and the Church concerned her marriage. Understandably, her family (particularly her twice-widowed childless aunt Rusudan) and the Catholicos wanted her to secure the monarchy by producing an heir, and the country by alliance with a major Christian power. Byzantium was in decline: the choice was Kievan Russia, the greatest Orthodox power. The *darbazi*, after some argument, chose the nearest available Kievan duke, Iuri Andreevich Bogoliubsky, who had at the age of 24 a fine military record fighting his Russian relatives. After his father's death, Iuri was ousted by his uncle Vsevolod from his fief, Novgorod, and sought asylum with the Qipchaqs, who were marauding Kievan Russia's borders from their base at Selenja in the north Caucasus. Tamar did not want to marry, especially in haste, a total stranger. Aunt Rusudan, Catholicos Mikel and Abulasan (a Georgian, despite his Arab name, who knew the Qipchaq chieftains) quickly sent Zankan Zorababeli, almost certainly a prominent Tbilisi Jewish merchant, to fetch the groom. (Abulasan and Zorababeli, it soon transpired, represented Tbilisi merchants who had a strong mercenary interest in a Russian connection: Abulasan was rapidly promoted after Iuri's arrival, becoming a powerful landowner and then chief treasurer.)[2] Despite Tamar's resistance, the marriage was celebrated immediately: Iuri was declared king (*mepe*), but Tamar as *mepeta-mepe*, *dedopalta-dedopali* (king of kings, queen of queens) remained the ruling monarch.

Iuri soon proved his prowess in the battlefield as only a male monarch could (Tamar usually accompanied her forces to the last church or monastery on Georgian soil and, offering prayers for victory, addressed them there). Iuri led an army into Armenia, besieging Dvin, attacking Kars, scorching Seljük territory all the way to Basiani (north of Erzurum) and bringing a large amount of booty back. Iuri's initials were on Georgian coins, inscribed 'God magnify the king and queen'; Armenian inscriptions between 1185 and 1191 name him King George the Conqueror. As conquering heroes, after another expedition, Iuri and Tamar visited Akhsartan, ruler of Shirvan. All her reign, Tamar liked travelling the length and breadth of her realm and its friendlier vassals, visiting princes and relatives, as well as monasteries and churches.

Politically, Tamar and Iuri's union was unfruitful: apart from Georgian craftsmen reported working on the Dmitrievsky cathedral of Vladimir,[3] there is no sign of any Georgian–Russian alliance. In private, the marriage was probably never consummated. Tamar's chronicler alleges:

'the Russian when drunk showed his Scythian habits . . . utterly debauched and utterly depraved he even went in for sodomitic behaviour'. Tamar had a deputation of monks remonstrate with Iuri, but to no avail; in 1188, after two and a half years of intolerable humiliation and defilement, Tamar demanded an annulment from the *darbazi* and the bishops. This was granted, and Iuri, generously compensated for his expulsion with gold and jewels, was put on a boat to Constantinople.

That year patriarch and chief minister Mikel Mirianisdze died (the chronicler remarks: 'nobody grieved, neither great nor small, for everyone loathed him'). Tamar was free to act: the former chief minister Anton Glonistavisdze was released from the monastery of Davit Garesja, while the new Catholicos-patriarch Tevdore Mirianisdze, although Mikel's brother, proved compliant. Tamar now appointed her own men: Sargis Mkhargrdzeli, who switched his loyalty to Giorgi III when the Orbeli rebels besieged him, became, after the death of a popular commander Gamrekeli Toreli in 1190, head of the army; Sargis's two sons, Zakaria and Ivane, became Tamar's most talented military and political servants; Chiaberi, a foster-child of Giorgi III, like a brother to the queen, moved from treasurer to *mandaturukhutsesi*, interior minister. (This post later became a Mkhargrdzeli hereditary post.) The Mkhargrdzeli brothers' vast landholdings in Georgia and Armenia and their political power and talents were such that their Kurdish-Armenian origins were overlooked. But they were monophysites, which caused conflict. In 1208 Catholicos Ioane publicly banned Zakaria as 'a heretic' from taking communion. Zakaria then summoned an Armenian-Georgian Church council to find a compromise, but Georgian dyophysites were adamant. Ivane, unlike Zakaria, decided to be rebaptized as a dyophysite.

Tamar was also free to marry for love. Her widowed aunt Rusudan was the foster-mother to a young Ossetian prince, Davit Soslan (the nickname Soslan is that of an Ossetian demigod, 'hewn from stone and reared on wolf's milk'; in Qipchaq Soslan meant 'dread'). Just as Georgian princes had been raised in Byzantium, so Ossetian and Armenian princes were raised at the Georgian court, to foster good relations between neighbouring royal families. As a direct descendant of Giorgi I by his Ossetian second wife Alde, and also related to Davit IV, two of whose daughters married into the Ossetian royal family, Davit Soslan was as good as a Bagratid. Although alliance with Ossetia brought Georgia little political advantage (in any case, Tamar's mother was Ossetian), Davit Soslan was still a good match. He showed military talent and was virtually Tamar's cousin: the *darbazi* stopped searching for more prestigious consorts. They were married in 1189. The union was fruitful (Giorgi IV 'Lasha' was born in 1192, and a daughter, Rusudan, in 1193), and politic: Davit Soslan could show severity at times when Tamar could only be merciful.

Georgia's Muslim vassals and neighbours exploited the wrangles besetting the Georgian court from 1184 to 1189. Resuming Giorgi III's campaigns was harder after Saladdin (Salah ad-Din), the Ayub sultan of Egypt, conquered Jerusalem on 2 October 1187. Tamar's first priority was the safety of Georgia's Holy Cross monastery, and two Georgian missions were sent to Saladdin, the second in 1192 securing Georgian pilgrims' privileges and the monastery's exemption from taxation in exchange for Tamar's promise not to make war on any Ayubid sultan's territory. An Arabic document survives in which Tamar promises 'in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be friend of your friends, enemy of your enemies, as long as I am alive, to have the best intentions, never to attack your towns, states or fortresses'. (The promise may be addressed to the Seljük sultan Qilij Arslan II, who, like Saladdin, was never at war with Georgia.)

Davit Soslan, however, could present his campaigns as self-defence, not aggression. In 1190 Seljük forces began raiding Tao, but were repelled, and the loot retrieved for the court in Tbilisi; then Erzurum's sultan was driven out of Tao by a local lord, Guzan. Real war began in 1191: Iuri Bogoliubsky turned up in Erzurum, whose aggrieved sultan welcomed a pretext to free himself from Georgian domination. Iuri was met in Erzurum by his Georgian aristocratic admirers, mostly from Tao-Klarjeti, but including two ministers, the chancellor Vardan Dadiani, and Botso, Georgia's deputy treasurer, and commander (*spasalari*) of Samtskhe (the southern provinces). It seems that the Tbilisi merchant classes who brought Iuri over the Caucasus with such alacrity were among those who now supported his *coup d'ětat*. The chief rebel, however, was Guzan of Tao who had loyally defended his sovereign the year before. These men penetrated deep into western Georgia, bringing Iuri Bogoliubsky to the royal palace at Geguti, outside Kutaisi, where they crowned him king. When Tamar recovered from her astonishment, she sent negotiators, the patriarch Tevdore Mirianisdze and the bishop of Kutaisi. The rebels refused to negotiate, and divided their army, sending the northern wing east across the Likhi mountains to occupy the citadels of Nacharmagevi and Gori, while the southern wing burned down Odzrkhe and then prepared to conquer Tmogvi, Akhalkalaki and the southeast of the country. Tamar had wind of their plans and sent loyal forces against her ex-husband's armies. The southern rebels were routed east of Tmogvi, and the northern army panicked at news of this defeat. The leaders of both armies surrendered, wearing ropes around their necks, and offered to hand over Iuri, if his life was guaranteed.

Tamar's response was typically mild: Iuri was sent back to Constantinople, this time without alimony; the rebel leaders lost their posts, but kept their heads. Tamar appointed new men, the loyal Mkhargrdzelis, Ivane and Zakaria, as chancellor and chief commander. Guzan of Tao slipped away home, where he surrendered his castle Taoskari and other

fortresses to the Muslim ruler of Shah-Armenia, before mounting an attack from Mt Kola, north of Tao, and being captured with his family. This time Davit Soslan forestalled his merciful wife (Tamar opposed torture, mutilation and executions) and had Guzan's eyes gouged out before his trial for treason: Guzan's son tried to rescue his mother and his children, but was defeated by the royal army, which repossessed all the castles Guzan had given to the enemy.

Georgian tradition marked the birth of an heir to the throne not only with royal gifts and amnesties for prisoners, but with a show of military power: in 1192, when Giorgi 'Lasha' ('Light of the World' in Abkhaz) was born, Davit Soslan invaded Azerbaijan and captured the old Caucasian Albanian capital of Bardavi. He then led a punitive expedition to Erzurum, which fell despite help from Sultan Nasreddin Saldukh of Kars. These raids, more intimidation than conquest,[4] provoked a massive response. The Seljüks appealed to Caliph al-Nasir in Baghdad, who ordered all Muslim rulers to make jihad on Georgia.

Atabag Abu Bakr of Azerbaijan led the coalition: he had seized power in 1191 by killing the previous atabag Qizil Arslan of the Eldigüz dynasty (a loyal subordinate of Sultan Rukn ad-Din Toghrul of Iraq), and then by murdering or expelling his own brothers. Abu Bakr first attacked Georgia's ally, Shirvan, and drove out Shirvanshah Akhsartan (whose mother was a Georgian princess): Abu Bakr's attack followed an earthquake that killed most of Shirvan's population. Akhsartan and his son-in-law Amir Mihran (an estranged brother of Abu Bakr) appealed to Tamar and Davit Soslan: they were given a resplendent welcome and promises of help. Amir Mihran planned to take over Abu Bakr's empire, to rule a large area of Iran and promised to Georgia whatever territory they wanted in exchange for help. Tamar and Davit were too canny to support Amir Mihran's wildest ambitions, but they moved against Abu Bakr.

Iuri Bogoliubsky did not give up: in 1193 he returned to serve the atabag of Azerbaijan, who made him governor of the northern province of Ar-Ran bordering Georgia. Here Iuri married a Qipchaq general's daughter, formed an army and pillaged Kambechan, Georgia's southeast province. He was quickly defeated by Saghir Makhatlisdze, the duke of Khornabuji (capital of Kambechan): Armenian sources suggest that Iuri was incarcerated in the Lurji monastery at Tbilisi, but his tomb has yet to be found.

In 1193 and 1194 Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli's forces were fighting along the Araxes river, penetrating to Dvin, Amberd and Bijnis. At dawn on 2 June 1195, under Davit Soslan, there was a battle at Shamkor in Azerbaijan between the main Georgian army and the Muslim coalition, after Soslan, 'acting like Achilles', came to the rescue of the unhorsed Mkhargrdzelis, broke through the city gates and attacked the enemy's rear. This was a

triumph comparable to the battle of Didgori 74 years earlier. The caliph's standards were seized and given by Tamar to the Khakhuli monastery. Shamkor was occupied, and a joint Georgian-Shirvani army marched on Ganja, whose citizens surrendered without a fight. After David enjoyed a reception in the sultan's palace, the city was given to Amir Mihran to govern as a Georgian vassal.

Georgian triumph was short-lived: Abu Bakr escaped encirclement and fled to Nakhichevan, from where three weeks later he had his brother Amir Mihran poisoned. Then Abu Bakr recaptured Ganja: intermittent war with Georgia ravaged Ganja and much of Azerbaijan for a decade. Davit Soslan's forces moved south, so demoralizing Abu Bakr that he told his ministers not to mention any further Georgian advances, and then drank himself into a fatal stupor. In 1197 the Georgians took Nakhichevan, levying tribute on this trading city, famous as 'the Persian bazaar'. Holding or dominating cities like Nakhichevan and Shemakha enriched the Georgian treasury. (Ganja, despite many attempts, eluded recapture even after Abu Bakr's death in 1195.) Georgian successes prompted several Iranian and Türkmen states around Azerbaijan to offer David and Tamar friendship, although twenty years later these successes would spur a more united Iran into wreaking vengeance.

Fighting further west than Soslan, Ivane Mkhargrdzeli led his troops in a campaign that systematically took Armenian cities from the Muslims: Gelakun and Amberd in 1196, Ani in 1199, Bijnis in 1201, finally Dvin in 1203.

Georgia was expanding too fast and far: not even with increased population and a flourishing economy could Georgia keep enough men in the field to hold down an empire now stretching 1,000 kilometres west to east, and north to south; Georgia risked infringing the sovereignty of Ayubid rulers and breaking the agreement between Tamar and Saladdin. Süleyman Shah, Seljük sultan of Rum (known as Rukn ad-Din), who planned to exploit Byzantium's weakness and occupy the Black Sea coast, now felt threatened by Georgia. In 1201 Rukn ad-Din attacked Erzurum and replaced Georgia's vassal Saltuk Oglu with his own brother, Moghis ed-Din Toghrul, who fought off the Georgian overlords. The next year, Rukn prepared to attack Georgia and all Christian Transcaucasia. At first Rukn ad-Din and Tamar exchanged pleasantries and gifts. Then Rukn ad-Din, declaring 'every woman is feeble-minded', sent Tamar an intemperate letter, calling her 'a simpleton of a queen . . . a killer and taxer of Muslims'. Tamar's first response was polite: 'You rely on gold and numerous warriors, I . . . on God's power.'[5] The bearer of the letter demanded capitulation and threatened extermination to recalcitrant Christians. The envoy conveyed an oral postscript: Rukn ad-Din would make Tamar his wife, if she converted to Islam, if not – his concubine. Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli punched the envoy

to the ground, telling him that, but for diplomatic immunity, he would have cut off first his tongue and then his head, and that Rukn ad-Din should await divine justice delivered by Georgians. The envoy left for Erzurum, not realizing that Tamar's *darbazi* had declared war and that a Georgian army was only ten days behind him.

Davit Soslan, the Mkhargrdzeli brothers atabag Ivane and Zakaria, Ivane Toreli and the brothers Shalva and Ivane of Akhaltsikhe led the largest army Georgia ever fielded: Tamar accompanied her army as far as the cave-monastery of Vardzia, where she prayed for victory. Rukn ad-Din assembled similar forces: he was helped by his brother-in-law, the sultan of Erzincan, but let down by Erzurum, which remembered it was a Georgian vassal. Arab and Turkish estimates put the Muslim forces at 400,000 men: they camped in southern Tao at Basiani. On the night of 23 July 1202 the Georgian army surprised the Turks, but Rukn ad-Din's forces rallied so fiercely that Georgian cavalrymen had to fight on foot and faced defeat until two wings kept in reserve swooped down and encircled the Turks. The historian Ibn Bibi blamed the sultan's horse, which got stuck in a bog, for starting a rumour of Rukn ad-Din's death and demoralizing his army.[6] Several days passed before Basiani became a conclusive victory with many important captives, including the sultan of Erzincan (who was ransomed for a herd of fine horses). The booty included an Arabic treatise on medicine, a *karabadin*, which the *mtsignobarukhutsesi* Anton Glonistavisdze ordered to be translated into Georgian – the resulting *Book for Doctors* was the first of several handbooks of Galenic medicine to serve Georgians, so often deprived of professional medical help, until the end of the twentieth century. Medicine was now included in the curriculum of Georgia's academies. (Anton Glonistavisdze's interests ranged widely: he commissioned, among many innovations, a sophisticated aqueduct that supplied Shio-Mghvime monastery with water.)

After Basiani, Georgian forces seemed irresistible. Rukn ad-Din died in 1204, and his successors Qilij Arslan and Kaykaus I at first failed to avenge defeat. Georgia, after the Fourth Crusade ravaged Constantinople in 1204, saw itself as the major Christian kingdom of the east. Only after Georgian armies took Manzikert, attacked Khlat on Lake Van and threatened Erzurum, did a Muslim coalition win a victory, but the Georgians recovered and in 1206 occupied both Erzurum and Kars, whose governor was bribed to surrender the city. The sultanates suffered badly by losing Erzurum and Kars, caravan posts used by Venetians trading between Europe and Iran. Ivane Mkhargrdzeli besieged Khlat, but was himself taken prisoner, and released only when the Georgians agreed to a truce and a ransom of 100,000 dinars, and Ivane offered his own daughter as a wife to the sultan of Khlat. (Ivane's brother Zakaria threatened the citizens of Khlat with massacre if they kept Ivane; on his release Ivane, the neophyte, had Khlat monastery paint frescos of Georgian saints.)

In 1208 the Ayubids, with whom Tamar had signed a treaty, stepped in, occupied Khlat, and imposed an Ayub, Malik Ahwad, on its unruly inhabitants, establishing peace and a new border between Christian Georgia and the sultanates. Georgia abandoned its ambitions west of the river Araxes.

In 1207 Davit Soslan died. Tamar barely appears in Georgian history over the next six years. Georgian military expansion to the southeast continued regardless: the Eldigüz empire suffered internal conflict, Georgian depredations, and the conquest of neighbouring central Armenia. The Georgians were moving also on Ardabil in Azerbaijan. While the Georgian court celebrated Easter at Geguti palace, the sultan of Ardabil struck first on Georgian territory: on Easter Sunday 1209 he marched through the open gates of Ani, stormed the churches, massacred some 12,000 Armenians at prayer, looted the city and left. The response from Geguti was an equally sacrilegious attack at the start of Ramadan on Ardabil's mosques, killing as many civilians and also the sultan, whose family became hostages.

The Mkhargrdzeli brothers' momentum took their armies deep into Iran: after a *darbazi* consultation in 1210, Tamar gave permission to advance round the south shore of the Caspian into Chorasmia. So fearsome was the Mkhargrdzeli reputation that cities like Tabriz, Miyaneh and Qazvin opened their gates to the invaders and paid tribute to avoid conflict. Iranian forces offered only sporadic resistance; the Georgian army's main problem was transporting the booty back to Georgia. The nobility was enriched, as were the treasury and the Church, while Tamar helped paupers receive a share of the proceeds. Contemporaries were bewildered as their army conquered places 'they had never heard of'. Tamar and the brothers Mkhargrdzeli called a halt before they outreached themselves. The previous year, Georgia had a salutary warning. Fomenting an Armenian revolt against the last Muslim overlords, Georgians had again besieged Khlat: Malik Ahwad, afraid his own people might hand over the city to the Georgians, locked himself up in his castle. The Ayub sultanate declared that it would tolerate no more encroachment. Georgia was allowed to annexe northern Armenia only. On this basis, from 1209, a durable peace ensued, and, using Georgian artisans, the Mkhargrdzelis built and rebuilt Ani's magnificent churches and cathedral.[7]

Meanwhile, a profitable, more urgent and less bloody opportunity for expansion arose. After 1204, at the mercy of its Latin invaders, the Byzantine empire shrank to a rump. Before the sultan of Rum could act, Tamar seized a vast stretch of the Black Sea coast, from Sinop to Trebizond, populated by Greeks and Laz, a Kartvelian people whose language is close to Georgian, and created a buffer state subservient to Georgia. Her pretext was the robbery in Constantinople of Georgian monks taking royal gifts for the Holy

Cross monastery in Jerusalem. After Tamar's brother-in-law Manuel Comnenus was blinded following the murder of his father, Emperor Andronicus, in Constantinople in 1185, Manuel's sons Alexis and David were brought up at the Georgian court. Tamar's compliant nephews were arguably heirs to the Byzantine throne; meanwhile, in April 1204, Alexios I was installed as the first emperor of Trebizond.[8] The death of Rukn ad-Din that year left the Seljüks too dismayed to crush this new post-Byzantine state: Georgian soldiers garrisoned Trebizond, Samsun and other Black Sea ports. Tamar and Davit Soslan tried not to provoke war by annexing any more territory; instead, they maintained the fiction that they were helping exiled Byzantines reassert their rights.

The only remaining military task was an internal affair. Between 1210 and 1213 an alliance of Georgian Pshav highlanders, Chechens and their Dagestani neighbours, all the more unruly after the illness and death in 1212 of Georgia's best general Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, required Ivane Mkhargrdzeli to intervene. Ivane asked to be appointed atabag of Samtskhe, a new hereditary post which outranked all other Georgian ranks. The new Atabag took an army to the peaks that divide Europe and Asia, isolated the Chechens so that they deserted the rebels, ruthlessly pacified the north Caucasus in three months, and announced to Tamar: 'On your orders I have ravaged the obstinate lands of Didos and Pshavs.' Georgia had now grown larger than ever before, or since. Including the empire of Trebizond, it stretched some 800 miles from Sinop east to the Caspian, and the same distance from Nikopsia (Tuapse) southeast to Nakhichevan.

After Davit Soslan died in 1207, Tamar crowned her fifteen-year-old son Giorgi Lasha as co-monarch. The queen's isolation and distress worsened after the deaths of her most trusted ministers, Anton Glonistavisdze (of old age after 1202) and Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, and she recedes from history. Tamar's last close adviser was atabag Ivane, whom she promoted to *amirspasalari*. She was preoccupied by her final illness, possibly cancer. Tamar died in January 1213 (some chroniclers, by miscalculation or poor copying, prefer 1207). But she died after the suppression of the Pshav-Dido rebellion; and a 1210 coin bears her initials of Tamar and Giorgi Lasha's.[9] At Nacharmagevi castle, she announced during discussions with her ministers and churchmen that she had long been concealing, hoping not to alarm anybody in 'a time of continuous warfare', a 'feminine infirmity' that was now rapidly getting worse. Tamar was taken by sedan chair to her summer palace at Tbilisi, where, despite attention from doctors and priests, she very soon died, after commending to her subjects both children, Giorgi and Rusudan, as her successors.

Tamar's tomb has been searched for at Gelati, at Vardzia and in the Holy Cross monastery in Jerusalem. A letter from a crusader, Guillaume de Bois, to Amadeus, bishop of Besançon, between 1204 and 1210 says

only that Tamar's 'sixteen-year-old son' (Giorgi IV would have been sixteen in 1208) hoped (but not that he managed) to bring his mother's bones to Jerusalem for burial.[10] In 1976 two female skeletons were found in the crypt of the Holy Cross, but no DNA has been examined. More cogent is written evidence that a later Tamar, wife of King David Narin, came between 1260 and 1293 to pray at Queen Tamar's tomb in a Gelati chapel; since time immemorial an annual Requiem Mass has been said at Gelati for Tamar on 1/14 May.

No Georgian monarch has been eulogized, by poets or by chroniclers, in and after her lifetime, as was Tamar. She became a mythical figure, especially among the highlanders who placed her in their pantheon as a god of fertility and of seasons. Canonized by the Orthodox Church, she was 'the fourth member of the Trinity' to contemporary copyists of the Gospels. Her monument is Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin*,[11] where heroines are as decisive and principled as heroes, and where the culture of chivalry is no longer national – not even Persian, although Rustaveli calls his work 'a Persian tale' – but operates by merging Platonism, Christianity and pragmatism into a new code of values. Like Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Rustaveli's poem is more than a courtly tribute to an idealized lady: it has the open-mindedness of the Renaissance, a Renaissance that in Georgia was soon aborted.

9
Mongol Invasion

✠

Giorgi iv ('lasha') from the start showed astonishing military prowess and wide-ranging interests. But the court, especially atabag Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, Giorgi's tutor, was alarmed by his overweening self-confidence and impulsiveness. The kingdom's first task, after the accession of this novice in 1213, was to convince its vassal states of its determination to uphold its policies. Uzbek, atabag of Azerbaijan, tested the waters by withholding payment of annual tribute. The Georgian army under Ivane Mkhargrdzeli immediately sent troops to Ganja and enforced Georgian suzerainty by besieging, instead of storming the city. Giorgi lost patience with his generals' decision, detached 4,000 men from the siege force and circled Ganja to attack from behind. The Ganja garrison realized Giorgi's vulnerability: they left the citadel and attacked. The ensuing fighting, although the Georgians won, caused heavy casualties. Because Ganja's besieged citizens were starving, Uzbek called for a truce. Tribute was paid, but Giorgi iv was reprimanded for recklessness.

Giorgi next upset the Church. While relaxing in Kakhetia, he spotted in the village of Velistsikhe a pretty young woman, a freeman's daughter; he seduced her, and, although she was married, installed her at court. In 1215 she bore him a son (the future king Davit Ulu), whom Giorgi gave to his sister Rusudan to bring up. A deputation of bishops, the Catholicos and ministers came to remonstrate with Giorgi: the woman was a commoner as well as another man's wife. In the ninth century Ashot the Great had been forced by Abbot Grigol of Khandzta to surrender his concubine to a nunnery; now Giorgi Lasha was forced to let nuns escort his mistress back to her husband. But he adamantly deemed the woman from Velistsikhe his wife and refused any marriage which his *darbazi* might negotiate for him. Giorgi Lasha committed the gravest royal sin: he would not beget a legitimate heir. Moreover, to the court's anger and chroniclers' distress, he now ignored his mother's ministers and associated 'only with his coevals'.

Giorgi consoled himself with more warfare. In Ganja and Azerbaijan, Georgia had trouble keeping the upper hand. The Iranian state of Chorasmia, east of the Caspian Sea, had over the last decade become aggressively expansionist, and saw Georgia as its rival in the conquest and unification of Iran. Uzbek also coveted Iranian territory. In 1215 Shah Muhammad II of Chorasmia invaded Azerbaijan and made Uzbek of Ganja his vassal. The next year Giorgi IV's army moved south into Azerbaijan, and Uzbek complained to the shah of Chorasmia. Shah Muhammad warned Giorgi that Azerbaijan was now Chorasmian: the shah's praise was shouted from every minaret in Ganja and his head stamped on every coin. Chorasmia mobilized an army of 50,000: only the Mongol threat of 1218 to Chorasmia saved Transcaucasia from invasion.

The economy of Georgia's vassal states suffered from inflation in the 1210s. Nineteen lines inscribed on a stone block of a now ruined church at Ani record the head of the Georgian Church, Catholicos Epipane, consecrating the church and intervening in conflict between the clergy and the dyophysite laity. Fees for baptism, marriage and burial had risen threefold to 100 Tbilisi dramas; priests also demanded a banquet or a whole cow-skin. The clergy refused to take less, the laity boycotted the Church. Epipane ordered the fees reduced by two-thirds: any extras had to match the layman's means. If this inflation was general, it explains the reluctance of Armenian cities to pay taxes to Tbilisi. Unlike the east, where an aggressive Chorasmia blocked Georgia from action, in the south the Georgian army could enforce its will. In 1219 Giorgi IV compelled vassal cities like Nakhichevan and Erzurum (then Karnu-Kalak) to pay annual tribute. Yet again, Khlat on Lake Van resisted and had to be reconquered.

By 1220 Giorgi had reaffirmed Georgia's dominance between Anatolia and Iran. His fame spread among the crusaders, and Pope Honorius III, hoping to organize a fifth crusade, wrote to Giorgi via his prelate Pelagius in Damietta, asking Georgia to join the Latins in liberating Jerusalem from Muslims. Giorgi Lasha intended to depart for Palestine, when suddenly Georgia was faced by a totally unforeseen threat.

> In the country of the Orient proper, called Chin–Machin, appeared astounding men, at a place called Karakoram: they were alien in face, customs and appearance . . . They were full-bodied, bold in their person, and strong on their feet, handsome and clean in their flesh, with small, narrow, dark eyes, with obvious and well-developed strength, their heads covered with thick black hair, flat-browed, with noses set so low that their cheeks stood out above their noses, their nostrils seemed just as small, their lips were small, their teeth even and clean, and they were completely without facial hair.[1]

If the *monapire* were watching Georgia's borders, the surprise should not have been total: Chingiz Khan had sent his generals Jebe and Subadai to conquer Chorasmia and neighbouring states in 1218; by 1220, Chorasmia was, like all Central Asia, conquered and Shah Muhammad II hounded out (he died of pleurisy on a Caspian island). The Mongol army were not just expert archers on fast horses: they brought Chinese siege machinery (catapults and rams) manned by Chinese experts and razed cities to the ground as well as robbing and slaughtering entire populations. In late 1220 the Mongols sent 20,000 men into Georgia and Armenia. They seemed uninterested in conquest: first, Chingiz Khan had ordered his general Subadai to capture Muhammad of Chorasmia, and his formidable son Jalal ad-Din; secondly, they were seeking winter pasture for their horses in the Araxes and Kura valleys. They invaded from Nakhichevan, driving atabag Uzbek from Ganja to Tabriz; in north-east Armenia the Mongols defeated, with heavy casualties, a hastily gathered force of about 10,000 men under Giorgi IV and Ivane Mkhargrdzeli. The numerous Mongol atrocities – which uncluded ripping babies from women's bellies – left the Georgians in disarray. They sought allies in Uzbek (brother of the unlamented Abu Bakr) of Azerbaijan, and Malik Ashraf of Khlat, and assumed that the Mongols would not return until spring.

Conquering Transcaucasia was not Subadai's remit, but Mongol intelligence intercepted war plans by Georgia, Armenia and their vassals, and the Mongols attacked when least expected, in the freezing cold and snowbound passes of January 1221, recruiting Kurds and Türkmen, led by Akush, a treacherous underling of atabag Uzbek. The Mongols got close to Tbilisi. Here they engaged a Georgian force, which defeated Akush's Türkmens, but was then massacred by the Mongol rearguard. In spring, after ravaging southeast Georgia, the Mongols withdrew to the Karabagh, then to Tabriz, whose governor Shams ad-Din paid a fortune to buy the city exemption. In August 1221 the Mongols slaughtered the population of Hamadan, then turned north, depopulating Ardabil and Ganja. They then crossed eastern Georgia. This time Giorgi Lasha was waiting with about 70,000 men: the armies met at Khunani on the river Kura. The Mongol tactic was to attack with its main body and then feign a retreat, after which a second Mongol army descended to encircle and destroy the enemy. Unprepared for this tactic, the Georgians lost half their men. Giorgi Lasha was badly wounded in the chest; on 18 January 1223 he would die of his injuries.

The Mongols then left the Caucasus via Derbent, passed through Qipchaq grazing lands, rounded the Caspian Sea and went on to fulfil the mission Chingiz Khan had given them: hounding the new shah of Chorasmia, Jalal ad-Din, across Afghanistan to the Indian frontier. Jalal ad-Din not only returned alive from India, his army much diminished, but

also inflicted on Subadai a unique, if not decisive defeat. As the Mongols vanished after fatally wounding Giorgi Lasha, the Georgians hoped that they had seen the last of these invaders. They ignored news of the disasters inflicted on Chorasmia and, at the battle of Kalka River in the North Caucasus, on a combined Russian and Qipchaq army.

Before he succumbed to his injuries, Giorgi tried to ensure his sister Rusudan's succession: he betrothed her to the shah of Shirvan. Giorgi then set off for Bagavan by Lake Van, where one of Armenia's finest churches then stood, to arrange the wedding. Giorgi IV died at Bagavan, and Rusudan's marriage was postponed until 1224, a year after she was crowned queen.

More destruction was caused by displaced peoples and armies than by the Mongols themselves. In 1222 the north Caucasian Qipchaqs, through whose lands the Mongols had passed, fled south and, when refused asylum in eastern Georgia and Armenia, pillaged and slaughtered, until the atabag of Ganja let them settle, which, despite Ivane Mkhargrdzeli's counter-attacks, they did. Rusudan first tackled the Qipchaq threat: the Qipchaqs defeated Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, but they were later crushed, deprived of their loot and forced back over the Caucasus.

In 1223 the *darbazi* had no leisure to wrangle over Giorgi IV's succession: a younger sister seemed a lesser evil than a bastard infant son. Rusudan was crowned unopposed. Unlike her brother, however, all her reign she deferred to her ministers and generals, showing political cunning only when she engineered the succession of her own son. Unfortunately, she inherited Queen Tamar's beauty without the charisma or wisdom: Rusudan's dithering encouraged Georgia's vassals and nobles to rebel. Threats from displaced Chorasmian forces under Jalal ad-Din, as well as the reappearance of the Mongols, made the lack of a strong autocrat fatal to Georgia. Betrothal to the shah of Shirvan, a traditional ally, fell through: the best marriage on offer was to the son of the sultan of Erzurum, Moghis ed-Din Turkan, who was so taken with Rusudan's looks that he agreed to convert to Christianity. The marriage soon produced a daughter, Tamar, and then a son and heir, Davit (eventually King Davit Narin).

Giorgi IV died before he could link up with western Europe and the crusaders: Catholicos Arseni III advised Rusudan to renew contact with Pope Honorius III.[2] Letters to the pope from Rusudan and atabag Ivane Mkhargrdzeli were entrusted to David, bishop of Ani. Rusudan explained that she initially took the Mongols to be Christians, mistaking their emblem of a white hawk for a cross (thinking that anyone slaughtering Muslims must be Christian). She claimed that Georgia had seen off these invaders (whom she called Tatars), losing only 6,000 men to their 25,000, and enquired whether Georgia could coordinate its struggle with Frederick II's crusade to Syria. The atabag's letter added that Georgia could provide 40,000 men.[3]

What Rusudan did not know was that Frederick II had no stomach for a crusade: like most European potentates he focused on the Ottoman danger. Nor did Rusudan and the atabag understand that the pope and many western kings saw Chingiz Khan as a deliverer. Although the Mongols destroyed Orthodox Christians as well as Muslims, they looked kindly on Christianity (some Mongols were Nestorian Christians) and on trade and diplomatic relations with Catholic Europe. Not until 1245 would the first papal mission set off to Mongolia, but few in the west thought the Mongols a menace. Honorius III answered Rusudan politely in May 1224, blessing the Georgians for conserving Christianity without overt schism from Rome; he had informed Frederick of Sicily, but the Georgians would have to pay their own way to Syria.

In 1225 Jalal ad-Din made all thoughts of a crusade irrelevant. Proving as indestructible as he was ingenious and violent, Jalal ad-Din brought the core of his army back across Iran, forcing or persuading most of Iran's and Iraq's rulers to accept his sovereignty in an anti-Mongol coalition. In 1225 the main Mongol force unexpectedly vanished back to Mongolia, where in 1227 Chingiz Khan died; only in 1229, after a *qurultai* (a Mongol parliament) decided Chingiz's succession and new conquests, would they return westwards. Meanwhile, Jalal ad-Din resolved to neutralize Georgia, his rival to hegemony in Azerbaijan and northern Iran. Jalal ad-Din moved north, conquering all Azerbaijan, except Shirvan. Atabag Uzbek sent his family from Ganja to the safety of Tabriz; he died shortly afterwards, and his widow was given to Jalal ad-Din. By August 1225 Jalal ad-Din's army of 40,000 was camped by Dvin. That year Rusudan gave birth to her son and heir Davit, but her consort was excluded from any decisions. It was Rusudan who instructed her commander-in-chief, atabag Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, to take 30,000 men into battle. The elderly atabag devised a disastrous battle plan: the Georgian vanguard would fight; the rest of the army would join in if the vanguard was successful, but flee if the battle seemed lost. At this battle of Garnisi, Jalal ad-Din got his blow in first; although the Georgian vanguard apparently held out, the rest of the army withdrew without a fight. One general, Ivane of Akhaltsikhe, was killed in the retreat by a falling rock. The fiasco made Garnisi a legend: Ivane's brother, Shalva of Akhaltsikhe (who fought and was captured by the Chorasmians) is known in a famous folk poem as the man 'who killed two hundred Turks /And then complained that nobody would fight'. Jalal ad-Din's trustworthy secretary, the historian An-Nasawi,[4] reports that the Georgians lost only 4,000 men, and that Jalal ad-Din did not pursue the retreating Georgians. Georgia was demoralized, if not incapacitated, by its first major setback in over a century. Several months remained to make coherent diplomatic and military plans.

Some say that Jalal ad-Din spared the Georgians because he had to turn southeast and repress a rebellion that had just broken out in Tabriz. But Georgian and Chorasmian sources state plausibly that he thought Georgia might become an ally in defeating an imminent second wave of Mongol conquest. He intended to use his prisoner Shalva of Akhaltsikhe as an intermediary, but after intercepting Shalva's letters to Georgia leaking details of the Chorasmian army, Jalal ad-Din beheaded his prisoner. Jalal ad-Din then sent conciliatory proposals to Rusudan, but the queen in fury broke off negotiations when she heard that the Chorasmians were looting Georgia's borderlands. Nevertheless, a truce was reached, and the river Hrazdan in Armenia became a provisional border between Georgian and Chorasmian forces. A demilitarized zone was established on either riverbank; Jalal ad-Din agreed to meet atabag Avag Mkhargrdzeli (the son of Ivane, now disgraced) on Bijnis bridge over the river gorge. Jalal ad-Din's proposals for peace and an anti-Mongol alliance included, however, two unpalatable conditions: Rusudan should divorce her husband and marry Jalal ad-Din; if the Chorasmian terms were rejected, Georgia would be invaded.[5] Avag agreed that neither side could defeat the Mongols on their own, and returned to Tbilisi. The Georgian court was outraged by Jalal ad-Din's marriage proposal; they responded with insults: 'You and your father fled the enemy and they conquered your land; we treated the enemy with contempt, and they gave up and left us.' Avag was instructed to break off negotiations. The Georgians deluded themselves that Jalal ad-Din was a busted flush: at the end of 1225 he was putting down rebellions in Nakhichevan and all over northern Iran. In any case, Georgians had no great desire to help the shah of Chorasmia win back his patrimony.

Jalal ad-Din deliberated: he moved his army to the Black Sea coast, where his troops disobeyed orders and amused themselves in southwest Georgia's forested gorges, hunting down refugees and selling them as slaves (so successfully that the price of a slave fell to two or three dinars). The Georgian court, deprived of intelligence in every sense of the word, decided that Garnisi had been a mere blip. Each lord fortified himself in his castle with his own part of the army. Jalal ad-Din also divided his army into widely scattered bands, the difference being that he could quickly reunite them in one coherent force. On 1 March 1226 the Chorasmian army moved on Tbilisi. The Georgians were desperate: Rusudan opened the Daryal Pass and summoned to Tbilisi a force of Ossetians, Chechens and Lezgi. Rusudan and her court, however, fled to safety in Kutaisi.

Jalal led a small force of 3,000 to tempt the Georgian garrison out of the citadel to face a well-hidden main Chorasmian army. The stratagem worked; the Georgian army was massacred. A Muslim in the demoralized city murdered the Georgian general Memna Botsosdze; the general's brother Botso took the surviving defenders to the castle of Isani, which

they abandoned when they saw how hopeless their situation was. Tbilisi suffered slaughter even worse than under Murvan the Deaf in 744: tens of thousands were killed with unspeakable cruelty; the streets were awash with blood, brains and human hair. The loot was so extensive that Jalal ad-Din's officials abandoned their inventories. Even when Jalal ad-Din, hearing that his vassals were intriguing with the Mongols, left for Iraq, the killings continued: the vizier Sharaf al-Mulk presided over pillaging and massacres from Kartli to Tao.

Relief came in September when Jalal ad-Din returned to punish rebellious Armenian cities: he retook Ani, but Kars drove off one Chorasmian army, and Khlat the other. Jalal ad-Din had more setbacks: the population of Tbilisi, he learnt, was inviting Rusudan to liberate them from the Chorasmian garrison; Jalal ad-Din's ally, the prince of Erzurum, reverted to Christianity and sent Georgia intelligence about Chorasmian forces. In February 1227, when even Tbilisi's Muslims resented Chorasmian rule, Georgian forces easily overwhelmed the garrison and recaptured Tbilisi. But Jalal ad-Din counter-attacked and burned much of the city to the ground; the retreating Georgians claimed they lit the fires themselves. Many Georgian manuscripts, a body of Golden Age literary masterpieces of which only half a dozen survive, were incinerated.

In 1228 Mongol forces repeatedly struck Jalal ad-Din in Iran: the Chorasmians were forced to withdraw. No doubt to the Georgians' *schadenfreude*, Jalal ad-Din implored the caliph of Baghdad and even the besieged ruler of Khlat for help; disillusioned by the Chorasmians' gratuitous violence, fellow Muslims refused. Georgia assembled its own coalition against Jalal ad-Din: Georgians 'from both sides of the Likhi mountains', Ossetians and Chechens assembled at the Nacharmagevi castle headquarters: 40,000 men, ill-prepared for battle, went south to Bolnisi where Jalal ad-Din's forces were waiting. Jalal ad-Din saw Qipchaq banners in the Georgian ranks and appealed to them, as fellow Turks, to switch sides. Offered inducements, the Qipchaqs withheld support from the Georgians. Consequently, the battle of Bolnisi of 1228 was yet another catastrophe: large swathes of Georgia were devastated. In 1230 Jalal ad-Din, his vigour renewed, turned on Khlat, this time torching the city.

The Georgians had one more breathing space: the sultan of Rum and Malik Ashraf of Damascus decided that Jalal ad-Din was too powerful and made war on him. Then the Mongol leader Ugedei crossed the Amur-Darya river into Iran. Jalal ad-Din's power ebbed. By the winter of 1230–31, Jalal ad-Din was holed up in Azerbaijan, trying to flee to Byzantium. The Mongols nearly caught him, in a drunken stupor, at Diyarbekir, but he escaped into the mountains, where his incognito was betrayed and a vengeful Kurd, whose brother had perished at Khlat, speared the shah of Chorasmia to death.

In 1230, to secure the succession for her son, the five-year-old Davit (the future Narin), Rusudan crowned him at Kutaisi as co-monarch: her nephew, the fifteen-year-old Davit (the future Ulu), despite his illegitimacy, was preferred by some nobles. Only in 1235 could Rusudan rid herself of the elder prince Davit: she betrothed her ten-year-old daughter Tamar to her own cousin, Kaykhusraw, who would become sultan of Rum in 1237 and marry Tamar in 1240, and had Davit Ulu held as a Seljük prisoner at Konya for the seven years, thus ensuring a strategic alliance with the Seljüks and her own son's path to the throne.

Rusudan now awaited a Mongol onslaught, decisive because the Mongols were now coming, apparently to settle, with womenfolk and children. Her own lords and bishops were dumbfounded: Rusudan contacted the pope, this time asking for help against the Mongols. Gregory IX replied to Rusudan in April 1233: he would send a missionary, Jacques de Russan, to convert infidels threatening Georgia, and he pardoned Georgian schismatics. In the next two years, the Mongols took all Iran and Azerbaijan.

The first Georgian-held city attacked in 1235 was Shamkor in Shirvan: its governor, Varam of Gagi, fled by night to Kutaisi (later, he and his son Aghbugha returned east and entered Mongol service). The Mongols then took Ganja, massacring or enslaving the population. That year Rusudan had returned to Tbilisi, which was now being rebuilt: she, like Varam of Gagi, retreated to Kutaisi, asking Tbilisi's governor, Mukhas-dze, to set fire to the city again if the Mongols came within 40 miles. Tbilisi burned yet again. Rusudan's nobles fled to their respective strongholds. Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli, the *mandaturukhutsesi* (minister of the interior), fled west with his family to Ajaria and deserted his fief of Lore, but left his father-in-law to face the army of Chingiz Khan's second son Chaghatai (Lore was Tbilisi's southern outer defence); atabag Avag, the *amirspasalari*, surrendered to the Mongols when his castle, Kaeni, ran out of water. Avag had deserted the city of Ani, where, in the ensuing anarchy, the people panicked and slew the Mongol envoys: the city was plundered and its citizens massacred. Meeting little resistance, the Mongol general Chormaghan took all Georgia, except Kakhetia, the highlands, Imeretia and Abkhazia. The southern province of Samtskhe, with its inaccessible fortress of Samshvilde, fought longest, but even its courageous duke Ivane-Qvarqvare Tsikhisjvareli-Jaqeli had to surrender when virtually every fighting man was killed or captured, and every other leader had fled west.

Victory assured, all over eastern Georgia the Mongols split into small bands, hunting down and massacring the population, even women and children who were hidden deep in caves and potholes. Despairing, Rusudan wrote again to Pope Gregory IX, hinting that she might reunite the Georgian and the Catholic Churches. A year later, she and her son Davit had a long reply: the pope regretted that he could not help; Saracens were troubling

Spain and Syria, and the Mongol yoke should be endured as a divine test. 'Don't be astonished, my very dear son, if the Church's army hasn't come to help you against the Tatars . . . distance has barely allowed us to hear of your misfortunes . . . defending religion in Italy, Syria and Spain demands all our strength. So, unable to help you otherwise, we wanted at least to send you this letter.' The pope welcomed Rusudan's request for union with Rome, and was sending his *Frères prêcheurs* to show her the path to salvation (the correspondence led to the foundation in 1240 of Tbilisi's first Dominican friary, which the Mongol rulers happily tolerated).

Finally, in 1239, on Ivane Jaqeli's advice, Rusudan sent four envoys (her commander-in-chief atabag Avag Mkhargrdzeli, his brother Shanshe, the interior minister, Varam of Gagi and Shalva Kupri, to negotiate surrender to Chaghatai: the Mongol leader received the envoys graciously and released Georgian prisoners. To ensure her personal immunity, Rusudan set off with Arsena, bishop of Chqondidi and *mtsignobartukhutsesi*, on the long trek to Batu Khan's capital on the Volga. Meanwhile, the Mongols occupied eastern Georgia; as they did everywhere, they avoided towns and villages and lived, always on the alert, in camps, or as nomads grazing their horses, cattle and sheep. After Rusudan's return from Batu Khan, peace terms were agreed: the Mongols controlled eastern Georgia; Rusudan ruled the west, but returned in 1242 to reside in Tbilisi as her capital; Georgian nobles would rank equally with the Mongol *noins* (lords); Georgia would lose its Muslim vassals (like Shirvan), but could keep its Christian, i.e. Armenian, territory; Georgia would pay annual tribute of 50,000 hyperpyroi (about 250 kilos of gold), pay various taxes and, above all, provide soldiers for the Mongol army. Davit, Rusudan's son, was recognized as Rusudan's heir, but first had to travel to the Volga, where he waited, together with the Russian duke Iaroslav of Suzdal, for Khan Batu to return from devastating central Europe. The two petitioners then vanished into the steppes of central Asia, travelling to Karakoram for confirmation by the Great Khan Ögedei (and his successor Güyük).

Queen of little more than a third of her realm, left for two years without her son, Rusudan's last hope was her son-in-law, Sultan Kaykhusraw II, who had refused the Mongols' orders to seek endorsement in Karakoram. Kaykhusraw organized a Muslim-Christian coalition against the Mongols and fought a pitched battle at Köse Dağ in the mountains above Erzincan. Although defeated and made a Mongol vassal, Kaykhusraw was allowed to remain sultan, but Rusudan's daughter Tamar was reduced in status to Gürcü Hatun, the 'Georgian lady'.

When, sick with anxiety, Rusudan died in 1245, there was no heir. Her son Davit was presumed to have died on the journey to Mongolia; her nephew Davit, although freed from Seljük captivity in 1242, was an ineligible bastard. Arghun Agha, the Mongol khan of Transcaucasia and Persian

Iraq, then divided the *vilayet* of Georgia into eight *dumnas*, provinces each supporting 10,000 Mongol soldiers, and Georgian noblemen, whether they had resisted the Mongols or not, were put in charge. The first *dumna*, Hereti, Kakhetia and Kambechan came under Egarslan Bakurtsikheli, making him virtual head of the Georgian nobility; the second *dumna*, Lower Kartli, down the river Kura as far as Shamkor, went to Varam of Gagi, who remained a nominal chancellor; the third *dumna*, Christian Armenia, came under the minister of the interior, Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli; the fourth, Inner Kartli, was the fief of Grand Duke Grigol of Surami; the fifth, Javakheti, came under Ivane Gamrekeli-Toreli; the sixth and largest, from Samtskhe to Erzurum, went to Ivane-Qvarqvare Tsikhisjvareli-Jaqeli (strengthening the hereditary reign of Jaqelis in Samtskhe); the seventh, Abkhazia and Mingrelia, went to Tsotne Dadiani (thus beginning the hereditary reign of Mingrelia's Dadianis), while the eighth, Racha and Imeretia, went to the duke of Racha. The seventh and eight *dumnas*, in western Georgia, suffered no Mongol presence and few Mongol taxes. The other six *dumnas* were made destitute by elaborate Mongol taxation.

Almost immediately, noblemen met at Kokhtastavi in Javakheti to fight Mongol oppression: the main grievance was military service: at first, 20 per cent of the male population between 15 and 60 were recruited for never-ending Mongol warfare against the Ismailites of Alamut in Iran; the peasantry, depopulated by army service, impoverished by taxation, could not pay their feudal dues; the weakened country was now exposed to aggressive Turkic nomads – some 60,000 Turks occupied grazing lands in Tao and Klarjeti. The humiliation of occupation was unbearable. Six of the eight *dumna* heads joined the conspirators (only the grand duke of Surami and Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli stayed loyal to the Mongols). Mongol intelligence, however, worked with telegraphic speed. Before most conspirators could leave Kokhtastavi to recruit a rebel force, news had reached Karakoram – even the pope's envoy Plano Carpini was informed. Arghun Agha's men arrested all the conspirators, except Tsotne Dadiani and the duke of Racha who had left earlier for home. By August 1246 the rebels were suffering torture in Ani: they obstinately denied treachery, saying they had met purely to allocate the tax burden. They were then stripped naked, bound hand and foot, and left in the heat of an Armenian summer, according to one account, covered with honey to attract the ants.

Tsotne Dadiani was already returning with a small army when news of the conspiracy's failure reached him at the Ghado Pass: he boldly set off with two companions to hand himself over to the Mongols and, when he saw the prisoners, stripped and joined them. To his Mongol interrogators he gave the same replies as the others and demanded to be executed, if that was their punishment. Impressed, the Mongols acquitted and reinstated all the conspirators.

After the conspiracy Egarslan Bakurtsikheli had acquired so much power that other nobles feared he might seize the vacant throne. They therefore overcame their distaste for bastards and sent for Davit, Giorgi Lasha's 30-year-old son. The Mongols insisted that Davit Ulu, too, must go to Karakoram for confirmation. In 1247 the two Davits met in Mongolia and argued their rights to the throne. A Georgian envoy told Güyük Khan that Georgian law could not decide between a bastard of the male line and a legitimate heir of the female line, and asked him to apply Mongol law. Polygamous Mongols had scant regard for such distinctions: they decided by seniority. Giorgi Lasha's son would be Davit Ulu (senior), and Rusudan's 22-year-old Davit Narin (junior). To the Georgians' dismay, the Mongols took a decision of Solomonic originality: both Davits would rule as kings in Tbilisi, but the junior should be subordinate to the senior.

At the end of 1248 both kings Davit were back in Tbilisi (the unfortunate Duke Iaroslav II of Vladimir had been poisoned in Karakoram). The Mongols abolished the *dumna* administration. At first the two kings collaborated, both signing all state decrees. Their first step was to punish noblemen who had used their absence in Mongolia to seize power. One, Torghua, duke of Pankisi gorge, had taken over all Kakhetia. Although the Mongols made it hard for the kings to rein in arrogant nobles, Davit Ulu managed to execute Torghua. Sargis Jaqeli, however, who openly preferred Mongol rule to obeying Georgian kings, was untouchable: the Mongols rewarded Jaqeli for supporting them against the Golden Horde by giving him autonomy as atabag of Samtskhe, almost all southern Georgia. Within a year, cracks appeared in the triumvirate of two kings and one Ilkhan. Davit Ulu, over dinner, began discussing the prospects for an anti-Mongol revolt. Naturally, Mongol intelligence acted instantly: all the conspirators, include King Davit Ulu, were shackled; the conspiracy was, however, dismissed as idle talk, and the prisoners were released for a large ransom in horses and money.

Almost until the end of the 1250s, the two kings and the Mongol administration coexisted. Nevertheless, the pressure on the country grew steadily. Although the Mongol conquests were nearly complete, they were still fighting from Iran to Egypt, and needed ever more soldiers and revenue to support their wars and their rampant bureaucracy as Mongol khans began forming individual states. But losses in war, and a flight of the population, particularly of artisans, from oppression was shrinking the Mongols' taxation base. In 1254 Mangu Khan ordered a census, the largest in history: in Georgia and Armenia, every male between 15 and 60, every head of cattle, fish pond, mill, vineyard and business, was counted; women, children and the elderly were excluded as were, for the time being, priests of any religion, their places of worship and their property. Taxation was then reorganized under a number of headings. Some taxes were reasonable:

tamgha, a VAT on sales, was set at 3 per cent; *dzghveni*, officials' salary costs, was set at one lamb from every 1,000 householders and a sheep from every 10,000; *qapcheri* taxed grazing animals at one per cent of stock annually. Other taxes were clearly useful: *saiame* paid for coaching inns and road maintenance; *bazhi* was a toll on merchandise using roads and bridges (it also deterred banditry and helped the Mongols track all movement in the country); *ulaqo* maintained the post-horse system (never before or afterwards were communications in Georgia so efficient). But the cumulative burden of tax on land, livestock and households, and *begara,* forced labour obligations, reduced the peasantry to starvation: it is estimated that 30 per cent of their income or harvest went to the Mongols, another 30 per cent to their Georgian feudal lords, and 10 per cent was levied by Mongol officials. There were emergency taxes for famine, a variable wealth tax (*tuzghu* or *satuzghue*) on the nobility and merchants; there were heavy demands for feeding the Mongol army: registered householders in Armenia had to provide annually many bushels of grain, amphoras of wine, cheeses, rope, beasts for slaughter, even arrows and horseshoes, as well as their annual household tax of 60 silver *tetri*. All these taxes were inflated by corrupt officials grabbing more than their due, and by tax farmers who, in exchange for a fixed sum paid to the treasury, extorted as much as they dared from the population. Worst of all was *qalani*, or conscription, which, after the 1254 census, was set at one soldier per nine registered male householders. (The Georgian army could field 90,000 men, which puts the population of Georgia and Christian Armenia then at around two and a half million.) Georgian soldiers had a high reputation: they fought in the vanguard, but were usually deprived by their Mongol commanders of any share of loot. Seven years' war on Alamut ended in 1256, but was followed by two years fighting the Caliphate of Baghdad and then a campaign against the sultan of Egypt.

The Church's tax exemption was disliked by Georgians: the Church became obscenely rich, acquiring land from impoverished peasants and noblemen. Only churches were built in Georgia under the Mongols, and artisans in silver, gold and stone worked almost exclusively for the Church. When the Mongols adopted Islam after 1300, they reintroduced *jizia*, a tax on non-Muslims, but abandoned it after this new tax threatened to cause an explosion.

In 1259 rebellions began in Azerbaijan; that summer Davit Narin organized his own rebellion. Hulagu Khan ordered Argun Agha in Tabriz to assemble an army, which slaughtered and captured many Georgians, but failed to impose peace. Arghun returned to Tabriz for reinforcements, and Davit Narin fled west. In Kutaisi, the nobility proclaimed Davit Narin as Davit VI, king of the Abkhaz (meaning Imeretia and all western Georgia). The country was not yet formally split, for in 1260 Davit VII Ulu also

rebelled against Hulagu Khan's conscription and taxation, in particular against Mongol officials who were fed by the royal kitchens and who taxed the king's cattle. The final straw was the Mongols' demand that Davit Ulu pay Davit Narin's tax arrears. Davit Ulu held a council in Javakheti and, supported by Sargis Jaqeli, defied the Mongols. He was backed by some nobles, but unwisely gave most of Kartli's lords the option of loyalty to the Mongols. Ivane Mkhargrdzeli and Kakha Toreli-Gamrekeli, the treasurer, were among senior figures who preferred the Mongols to King Davit Ulu. These lords returned to Surami fortress and joined Arghun Agha's army of 20,000, which set out to punish both rebel kings Davit. Meanwhile, Arghun Agha arrested Davit Ulu's queen Gvantsa (who had previously been married to a Mkhargrdzeli) and their infant son, the future King Dimitri, and sent them to the Horde in Tabriz.

Davit Ulu's 8,000 men had little hope of overcoming a Mongol army. Sargis Jaqeli, however, advised the king to leave the safety of the gorges on the Armenian border and take on the Mongols near Gori. In December 1260, thanks to advice the Mongols received from Kakha Toreli-Gamrekeli, Davit Ulu was routed. Again, Arghun went to Tabriz for reinforcements, and in 1261 ravaged Samtskhe for twenty days; more nobles threw in their lot with the Mongols. Nevertheless, Arghun could not take the main citadel, Tsikhisjvari, and abandoned the campaign. Instead, in July 1261, to punish Davit Ulu, Arghun had Queen Gvantsa executed, together with *amirspasalari* Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli, whose only crime was being Sargis Jaqeli's son-in-law. (Gvantsa was Davit Ulu's third, and only Georgian, wife; his first wife Jigda Khanum had died in 1252, and he had repudiated his bigamous Mongol consort, Althun; in 1268 he would marry a Mongol princess.)

Davit Ulu and Sargis now gave up the struggle and joined Davit Narin in Kutaisi. Here, however, despite freedom from Mongol oppression, the two kings quarrelled, and the west Georgian nobility split into two factions. They farcically decided to split everything – Kutaisi, Tbilisi, the treasury, their dependent lords. This arrangement did not last: two years later, Davit Narin decided to stay west of the Likhi mountains, while in 1262 Davit Ulu set off with Sargis Jaqeli to Tbilisi to negotiate with the Mongols.

Surprisingly, the Mongols, for all their fury at Davit Ulu, were amenable. Eastern Georgia proved ungovernable without a Georgian king. Many merchants, notably the Jews of Tbilisi, as Marco Polo noted in 1272, migrated to the relative security of western Georgia (in the fourteenth century in Gagra in Abkhazia a Jewish community, led by Josef of Tbilisi, was noted for its rabbi Yehuda ben Yakov). Other Tbilisi Jews went to Tabriz.[6] In King Davit Ulu's absence, power in Tbilisi had gone to the city's richest merchant, Shadin, whom the Mongols wanted to tame. Arghun

Agha interrogated both penitents; Sargis Jaqeli took the blame for the king's insubordination, his pretext being that taxation had made life intolerable. The Georgians' interpreter, Sadun Mankaberdeli, typically a low-ranking man promoted by the Mongols for his linguistic ability, cleverly sweetened Sargis's and Davit's apologies. But they were saved by luck. Their interrogation was interrupted by a courier with news that Berke Khan of the Golden Horde was coming across the Caucasus with a large army to attack the southern Horde. The break-up of the western Mongol empire was beginning: Hulagu Khan and Arghun Agha now urgently needed Georgia's help. Davit Ulu was sent in 1263 to fight in western Azerbaijan; from 1264 he was allowed to resume his reign in Tbilisi. Split into two kingdoms, Georgia could only fragment further.

10
The Fractured State

✠

Davit Narin's rule immediately relieved western Georgia (now known as Imeretia, 'the other side') from Mongol taxation and conscription. Stability was assured by Davit Narin's long reign from 1258 to 1293. His foreign policy undermined the Ilkhan Mongols: the king befriended the Ilkhan's main enemy, the northern 'Golden' Horde: he sheltered the rebel Teguder and the refugee Ghalghur whose forces fought Ilkhan Abagha.[1] Davit Narin was able to forge an alliance with anti-Mongol Muslims in Anatolia and Egypt: his sister Tamar (Gürcü Hatun), when her first husband, Sultan Kaykhusraw II, died in 1246, married the son of the sultan's vizier, Pervane Mu'in ad-Din Suleyman, who emerged as the sultanate's most cunning and powerful politician. In 1264 and 1268 Davit Narin sent envoys to Sultan Beibar in Cairo. Davit Narin discarded his first wife, Tamar Amanelisdze, by whom he had three male heirs, Konstantine, Mikael and Vakhtang, and married in 1254 Theodora, daughter of Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus, thus forging links with Byzantium, as well as begetting one more heir, Aleksandre. No wonder that the king was called 'Davit the Clever'. He entrenched his kingdom's independence by hiving off the Church. While the Catholicos in Tbilisi remained the all-Georgian patriarch, western Georgia's Church was governed by the Catholicos of Abkhazia.

Davit Narin's foreign policy had drawbacks. Teguder's armies were expensive: they demanded 500 cows, 600 horses, 2,000 sheep and enormous quantities of wine; they also terrorized Imeretia's eastern borders, and had to be suppressed. In 1276 the fugitive Ghalghur decided to placate Ilkhan Abagha. He conspired with Kakha Kakhaber, duke of Racha, to capture Davit Narin and take him to the Horde for execution. Abagha gave the conspirators 30,000 men who crossed the Likhi mountains and attacked Kutaisi. Davit was then taking a bath, and fled the palace half-naked. A second attempt on the king also failed, but Kakha Kakhaber was pardoned and restored to his dukedom. In 1278, however, a Mongol *noin*,

Aliqan, was hired to arrest Davit: this third plot was discovered, and Davit Narin executed all the plotters, including Kakha Kakhaber, whose kinsfolk were then deported to Constantinople.

The empire of Trebizond was a fiefdom of Davit Narin's western Georgia, but the Georgians were losing control of Trebizond's rulers. Earlier, in 1244, Trebizond had used the Mongols to fend off invasion by the Seljük sultanate. Byzantium also supplanted Georgia at the Trebizond court: John I of Trebizond (*r.* 1282–97) had married a daughter of the emperor. Davit Narin invaded Trebizond in 1282, but failed to take the city or stop John I returning from Constantinople to resume his reign.

Davit Narin's hold on Trebizond weakened further when a new force fought for access to the Black Sea. The principality of Samtskhe expanded, acquiring Laz territory from Trebizond in exchange for armed assistance. In 1266, shortly after Georgia split into two, Sargis Jaqeli persuaded the Ilkhan Mongols, with whom he was on good terms, to treat Samtskhe, (from Ajaria on the Black Sea to the west of Javakheti south of Tbilisi, as far south as Erzurum) as *inju* (crown lands) and himself as prince. Samtskhe became a third new Georgian state, lightly taxed by the Mongols. Samtskhe suffered when Ala Temur, khan of the Golden Horde, pursued the Ilkhans across southern Georgia in the early 1260s, but it prospered towards the end of the decade. Samtskhe's freedom from taxation and conscription attracted runaway peasants and artisans from Kartli: in the second half of the thirteenth century it was the only Georgian region where churches, monasteries and towns were built and legislation enacted. The arrangement suited the Mongols: under Sargis Jaqeli and his son Beka, Samtskhe had an army of 12,000 men who stopped Turkish nomads raiding and settling the pastures of Tao, which the local lord Zaza Panaskerteli was too weak to defend.

Life in Kartli and Kakhetia under the Mongol vassal Davit Ulu was grim. The Ilkhans fought the Golden Horde for grazing lands in Azerbaijan and the trade routes linking Asia and Europe. Georgian troops were conscripted into perpetual internecine warfare between rival Ilkhans. Ala Temur, after ravaging Samtskhe, tried to cross Georgia from south to north, but was diverted, with his army and its womenfolk, down the Kura as far as Kakhetia: many Mongols and Turks in this Golden Horde army settled the Kura valley. When the two Hordes clashed at Derbent on the coast, King Davit Ulu and atabag Sargis Jaqeli led Ilkhan Hulagu's army against Berke Khan. Hulagu and the Georgians had more casualties, but Berke Khan withdrew. In 1263 Berke Khan began constructing a mighty system of ramparts and trenches along the border of Shirvan and Georgia, following the Tetri Tsqali river. The Georgian king and army were conscripted into building this defensive wall. Its toll was heavier than battle losses. Thousands of peasants were taken off the land: the harvests of

1263 and 1264 were disastrous; Georgia was cut off from its prosperous neighbour, Shirvan. The Mongols' internecine struggles worsened. Berke invaded Georgia again, devastating the Kura's left bank from Shirvan to Tbilisi, while Davit Ulu and Abagha Khan ravaged the right bank, leaving arable lands barren for the next twenty years, fit thereafter only as game reserves or winter pastures. Irrigation systems were irrevocably destroyed. On Easter Sunday 1264 Berke Khan levelled Rustavi, including its cathedral and Martqopi bishops' palace, and massacred the entire population: painted Easter eggs and thousands of mutilated skeletons, uncovered by archaeologists in Rustavi's ashes, testify to the horrors. Other prosperous centres, like Khornabuji and Khunani, were destroyed.

The Golden Horde khan Teguder paused in Nakhichevan for a while, before trying again to overthrow the Ilkhan Abagha and reach the main body of the Golden Horde on the Caspian. Teguder lost this war of 1265–70 and, with his surviving men, sought asylum with Davit Narin, placing his generals and their clans on each of the three strategic passes leading to Kartli over the Likhi mountains and over Ghado in the south. A new war between him and Abagha thus ravaged western Kartli. Finally, Davit Narin terminated Teguder's asylum and blocked his retreat. Abagha's horde captured the rebel. Teguder's last 1,000 men headed for the Black Sea, with 300 camels and 150 carts laden with loot: all perished in Ajaria's notorious landslides.

The Ilkhans showed no gratitude for help in destroying Teguder. In the 1260s Hulagu Khan had hired Ossetian mercenaries for Davit Ulu: now Ossetians flooded into Georgian cities – Tbilisi, Dmanisi. These Ossetians included Lymaen-tsaw, dowager queen of Ossetia, and her two young heirs, Parejan and Baeghatyr,[2] to whom the Mongols gave fine land and payments for their service. The Ossetian influx disturbed the ethnic balance of Kartli and Kakhetia. Meanwhile, the Ilkhan's cattle and horses moved twice a year, from summer pastures and back, from Armenia to the foothills of the Caucasus, destroying crops, depriving Georgia of the produce of the highlands. Tabriz, Maragha, Qazvin and Bardavi served the Horde as temporary capitals; the Mongols were only a shadowy presence in Georgian towns, but they drained the countryside: their cavalry travelled with family, baggage and cattle.

Consequently, Georgian peasants fled taxation, conscription and starvation. Churches and monasteries had to exempt peasants and their lords from tithes and other dues. Parishioners could not afford priests' fees for baptism, marriage and burial. Nobles donated serfs to monasteries, hoping that the wealthy Church could better protect them. It was hard to find peasants to work the land and raise the revenue needed to pay the Mongols. Even nobles became landless. Land, especially taxable, lost value for want of buyers and scarcity of money: only the Church had enough

revenue to buy out desperate landowners. 'Gold is dearer, countryside cheaper,' states one Church document. Documents tracing land sales illustrate the plight of Davit Ulu's kingdom. Credit unions were formed: an *ortaghi* (member) would go to Baghdad, now Mongol territory, and buy cheap gemstones and metal. One Kakha Torneli bought with his profits the village of Khokle, which a Georgian Aghbugha had sold to a consortium of a Jew, a Muslim and an Armenian: the village finally fell into the hands of a monastery.

Impoverished nobles fought to recover their land from the Church. The Church held on: in a synod of 1263 they protested at Davit VII Ulu's efforts to reclaim lost crown lands. The king was supported by Basil, bishop of Chqondidi and *mtsignobartukhutsesi*, who singled out for return land originally granted by the king. Defying threats of excommunication, even of church closures, Davit Ulu decreed all royal grants of land null and void unless reconfirmed by a new king on accession: the land was his by divine right, and he would pay any Mongol taxes due. The populace and nobles with no ecclesiastic posts sided with the king, but the Church plotted against the royal court, forcing Basil of Chqondidi to resign, and the king to pay compensation for land he repossessed. Neither treasury nor serfs were any better off. The Church itself reminded the Mongols to renew tax exemptions on their property and serfs, for Chingiz Khan had ordered 'Mongols to fear all Gods and pay them respect.' (No wonder that Orthodox clerics, in Russia as in Georgia, regarded the conquest as a blessing, not just a punishment for sin, when they preached that the Mongols were sent by God.)

In 1270 Davit VII Ulu died of typhoid on the unsanitary Mongol ramparts between Shirvan and Georgia. His eldest son, by Jigda Khanum, had died two years previously, aged eighteen. His heir was Dimitri (or Demetre) II, the eleven-year-old son by his second queen Gvantsa, whom Hulagu Khan beheaded. The boy was educated by a regent, Sadun Mankaberdeli, a former serf of the Mkhargrdzelis who had interpreted when Davit Ulu was interrogated by Arghun Agha on suspicion of treason. Dimitri was taken to the Horde in 1272 and told by Abagha Khan to make Sadun Mankaberdeli atabag, i.e. prince: for ten years Sadun was Abagha's viceroy of Kartli and Kakhetia. He took command of the Georgian army, too, and acquired vast landholdings.

Dimitri inherited a smaller Georgia than his father had: its eastern border was the Tetri Tsqali river; Sargis Jaqeli had sliced off the south, although Dimitri retained Ani and Kars. Not until 1281, when Sadun died, could Dimitri exert power. His adolescence was uxorious: in 1272 he married a daughter of 'the Great Captain' Emperor Manuel I of Trebizond: she bore him four sons and a daughter. Later he had an unconsecrated marriage with Solghar, daughter of the Mongol emir Bugha: Solghar bore him

a son and two daughters. In 1280 he married Natela, daughter of Beka Jaqeli, atabag of Samtskhe. (Giorgi V 'the Brilliant', the son of that marriage, would inherit two-thirds of Georgia and thus reunify the country.) The synod denounced Dimitri's marriage *à la mongole* as immoral. Patriarch Nikoloz II found the king indifferent to his remonstrations and resigned in 1280. But the populace liked Dimitri: at night he walked Tbilisi's streets distributing alms.

Dimitri fought for the Mongols. Like his father, he served on the defence ramparts; later, he fought in the Mongol army's increasingly unsuccessful wars with Egypt. Many Georgians perished in battle on 16 April 1277; most of an army of 30,000 Georgians, Armenians and Greeks were killed in 1280. In the battle of Amasya in 1281, where some 5,000 Georgians lost their lives, Dimitri himself nearly died.

The Mongols valued Dimitri's valour, but he fell victim to their internal feuds. He was himself partly to blame: when Sadun Mankaberdeli died, Dimitri appointed Sadun's son Khutlu Bugha as commander-in-chief, but refused to confirm him as atabag, giving the post to Sadun's enemy, Tarsaich Orbeli. Khutlu Bugha bided his time. In 1282 Khan Abagha died and his brother Ahmad took power; Abagha's son Arghun then rebelled. Dimitri initially supported Ahmad, but switched sides, so that Arghun could endorse him as king and make him atabag of Lore. Unfortunately, Emir Bugha, the day-to-day governor of Transcaucasia, was caught conspiring against Arghun, and, on 17 January 1289, executed. The Mongols always executed a traitor's kith and kin: King Dimitri, as Bugha's son-in-law, was doomed. Arghun summoned him to the Horde.

Dimitri convoked his *darbazi*, attended by his ministers, the country's nobility and senior clerics. Everyone knew that either the king went to Movakan to be executed by Khan Arghun, or a Mongol army would depopulate Kartli and Kakhetia. Some advised the king to withdraw to Mtiuleti highlands and fight, others to seek asylum in 'Abkhazia' with his cousin King Davit Narin. In the end, counselled by the Catholicos-patriarch Abram I (who, unlike the prudish Nikoloz II, supported the king unconditionally), Dimitri set off to the Horde, taking, in the hope of mollifying the Mongols for whom he had fought so hard, his infant son Davit, the Catholicos and valuable gifts. As the convoy approached the Horde at Movakan on the Kura, the king was seized together with all his baggage. A Mongol emissary then rode to Tbilisi to make an inventory of all the king's personal property and confiscate it. After a brief 'trial', Dmitri was sentenced to death. Arghun at first delayed the execution, for none of Dimitri's offspring seemed a credible heir. The vindictive Khutlu Bugha, set on seeing Dimitri beheaded, proposed Vakhtang, King Davit VI Narin's eldest son, as Dimitri's successor, thus reuniting the country under Mongol rule. Arghun agreed: at 10 a.m. on 12 March 1289 Dimitri was publicly

beheaded, and then canonized as St Dimitri the Self-Sacrificing (*tavdadebuli*).

Kartli and Kakhetia's nobles eagerly swore allegiance to the new king Vakhtang II: they too saw him as the country's unifier. Vakhtang was sent to the Horde for confirmation as king of eastern Georgia and, when his father Davit Narin died, of western Georgia, too. Arghun gave him his sister Oljat as a wife, and Khutlu Bugha was reinstated as atabag.

Death undid the Mongols' plans. In 1292 Vakhtang II died, and was buried on Davit Narin's territory, at Gelati monastery; in 1293 Davit Narin died. In neither Georgian kingdom was the succession certain (under the Jaqelis, however, Samtskhe, remained stable). In Kartli and Kakhetia, Arghun was succeeded by his brother Ilkhan Gaikhatu of Iran, known for depravity, financial daring and a predilection for Nestorian Christians. Gaikhatu appointed Davit VIII, the nineteen-year-old eldest son of Dimitri II. Davit VIII followed his father's risk-taking, siding in 1295 with a rebel Mongol, the cross-wearing Baidu Khan, against his cousin Gaikhatu. Ilkhan Gaikhatu was that year strangled for the chaos caused by his forcing Baghdad's merchants to accept banknotes. Baidu ruled for only a few months, before being overthrown by Arghun's son Mahmud Ghazan, a fervent Muslim who held power for a decade. Although the Georgian king hurriedly acknowledged Ghazan's coup, Ghazan decided to punish Davit VIII, just as Arghun had punished Dimitri the Self-Sacrificing. In 1297 Davit VIII, who had witnessed his father's execution eight years before, ignored a summons to Tabriz and fled to Mtiuleti, where he fortified the town of Zhinvani with Mongol-style ramparts, and then holed himself up in the castle of Modimnakhe (literally, 'Come and see me'). Fighting for his kingdom, Davit clutched at straws, offering to let the Northern Horde through the Daryal Pass. Khan Ghazan first negotiated, then threatened to replace Davit VIII with one of his many brothers, and finally cajoled Georgian nobles into joining a punitive Mongol expedition that ravaged Kartli and Mtiuleti.

In 1299 Ghazan, as he threatened, replaced Davit VIII with his youngest brother Giorgi V, but Giorgi V ruled only Tbilisi and its outskirts. In 1302 Ghazan deposed Giorgi V (who would make a resplendent reappearance) and appointed an even younger brother, Vakhtang III. Vakhtang (in 1276) half-heartedly campaigned against his brother Davit. The Mongols camped at Mukhrani, occupied much of Kartli and repeatedly attacked for several springs and autumns. Davit VIII sometimes won, as at the battle of Tskhavati, where he killed 500 Mongols, but lords such as Shalva Kvenipneveli, duke of Ksani, southerners such as Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli with a Meskhian army, and the Ossetians of Gori helped the Mongols flush Davit out. Only the highlanders supported Davit, which prompted the Mongols to torch much of Kartli and Mtiuleti. Finally, Ghazan proposed

a truce, offering to depose Vakhtang III if Davit VIII joined the Ilkhanate in attacking the Golden Horde. Khutlu Bugha, as a Georgian atabag in Mongol pay, discussed peace terms with Catholicos-patriarch Abram: together with the Qadi of Tbilisi and Ivane Burseli (later executed by the Mongols), they met at Mukhrani, Mongol headquarters in Tbilisi.

Negotiations failed. Vakhtang III remained king (even agreeing to rule eastern Georgia in tandem with his brother). But the Mongols needed him outside Georgia as commander of Georgian and Armenian troops in their Syrian and Palestinian wars. In 1300 the Mongols carried off Jerusalem's city gates. The Mongols were credited with liberating Jerusalem by Pope Boniface, who invited Mongol delegates to attend jubilee celebrations in the Vatican. When the Mongols made Jerusalem an open city, it was done with Georgian troops, thus ironically fulfilling Georgian kings' wildest dreams.[3]

Davit VIII fought a guerrilla campaign for a decade until 1304–5. His fringe kingdom was not only ravaged by the Mongols and his brother Vakhtang III, but also by opportunistic Dagestani raiders. Navruz, the new Ilkhan, was a Muslim intolerant of Christian vassals. Eastern Georgia was no longer a state. Towns shrank into villages. Ruined quarters of Tbilisi were ploughed up for vineyards. East–west trade now bypassed Georgia and went through Mongol-held Tabriz or Baghdad. The GDP in 1300 was perhaps a quarter of GDP in 1200. Agriculture virtually died out: the population ate carcases. Corpses littered the fields and streets. Those who could, fled on foot to Samtskhe. The Church named the 1290s and 1300s as the 'great oppression (*vitsroeba*)'. Ethnic tensions ripped Kartli apart: Ossetian immigrants sided with Mongols against Georgians, and with Beka Jaqeli, atabag of Samtskhe, against the kings of Kartli and Kakhetia.

The crisis dismayed Khan Ghazan: he begged his troops to restrict their looting and not to torture women and children, and his officials not to beggar and depopulate the country. In 1303 Ghazan forbade noblemen to kill or enslave their peasants, and stemmed the peasants' flight from the land by decreeing the peasants serfs, tied to the land, and giving serf-owners the right for 30 years to recapture fugitives. Ghazan collected taxes just twice yearly, allowing lords and peasants twenty days to pay. To compensate his generals for their reduced income, Ghazan handed out crown lands, complete with serfs, to military units. Ghazan undertook some rebuilding, but not in cities torched in punitive raids.

The outcome was a realization by both sides that the Mongols could not neutralize a Georgian rebel king entrenched in impenetrably forested mountains. Given his precarious situation, it is a miracle that Davit VIII achieved anything. But he had the sympathy of Sultan Beibar of Egypt, who in 1305, as a gesture of solidarity, reconsecrated the church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem (Konstantine, then king of Imeretia, paid for the

frescos' restoration): the church had been a mosque since 1273. The sultan gave Georgian pilgrims access to Jerusalem, and Arab envoys escorted them from Aleppo. By 1305 the Mongols were too mired down in Syria and northern Iran to pursue Davit VIII further: he was allowed to rule the south of Javakheti, as well as his highland fastness. In 1308 Davit died; his brother Vakhtang died in 1311 before he could take over all Kartli and Kakhetia. The Mongol Ilkhan Öljeitü then put Davit VIII's infant son, Giorgi VI Mtsire ('the minor'), on the throne, allowing his uncle, King Giorgi V from 1299 to 1302, to rule again as regent. The Horde confirmed Giorgi the Minor as king of all Georgia, but denied him or his regent the means to rule Kutaisi as well as Tbilisi.

In western Georgia, the death of King Davit VII Narin in 1293 led to chaos. No sooner had his eldest son Konstantine taken the throne, than the second son Mikael, already duke of Racha, rebelled and usurped the border region of Argveti. Just as eastern Georgia had two kings, Vakhtang in the capital and Davit VIII in the mountains, so western Georgia had Konstantine hanging on in Kutaisi until his death in 1327, while Mikael waited in the mountains until he could rule from 1327 until 1329.

Giorgi VI died mysteriously, still a minor, in 1313. His uncle, Giorgi V, was once again crowned, and this time stayed put. He aimed, from the start, to be king of all Georgia and he had cooperation from the Mongols, particularly from his suzerain Emir Choban, who happily gave Giorgi autonomy and tax revenues in exchange for Georgian help in suppressing Mongol rebels. (This required an expedition into Anatolia in 1315, the last time that Georgian soldiers fought for the Mongols.) Ilkhan Abu Sa'id then had Giorgi V brought to the Horde to be confirmed in 1317 as king of all Georgia, including 'the sons of King Davit [i.e. Abkhazia-Imeretia] and the Meskhi sons of Beka [i.e. Samtskhe]'.

Giorgi first bridled the nobility, since the Mongols authorized him to confirm, dismiss or punish them according to their loyalty to the crown. Giorgi's independence encouraged the Mongols' enemies, particularly the sultan of Egypt: Giorgi V sent two embassies to Cairo, in 1316 and 1320 (the latter including Pipa Shalvas-dze, duke of Ksani, whose father had obstructed Giorgi's eldest brother Davit VIII, and deacon Ioane Bandais-dze). Like his predecessors, Giorgi wanted the restrictions relaxed that had been imposed on Georgian pilgrims and monasteries; he offered the sultan military help. Giorgi was given the keys to Christ's tomb, returned part of the True Cross, and the sultan permitted Georgians to enter Jerusalem free of charge, with banners flying, and no longer compelled to ride side-saddle.

Rumours of Georgia's resurgence reached Rome. In 1321 Pope John XXII wrote to Giorgi V:

> We don't want your riches, we want your souls. What joy if you to whom the title of chief and princes of your people have been given because of your superior intelligence . . . listen favourably to the proposals our messengers of peace are bringing and return to . . . the Catholic Church . . . the order of Minors are bringing presents . . . if we thought prelates might be more use or more agreeable to you, we would have sent them. Give the Minors safe-conducts . . . to visit the Tatars and peoples even further away with whom you have a valuable treaty.[4]

With a strengthened Catholic mission in Tbilisi, Georgians also became missionaries: in 1321 one Demetre was martyred in India. In 1328 the pope transferred the bishopric of Smyrna to Tbilisi, where Johannes of Florence served until 1347 (Catholic bishops, some Franciscan, some Dominican, presided in Tbilisi for several hundred years). Johannes was accompanied by Galanus, a Theatine missionary who translated the first books (none survives) of Catholic instruction to appear in Tbilisi. There was some Orthodox resistance, however: the Catholic bishop of Sukhumi (Sebastopolis) complained that 'eastern Christians' were oppressing the Genoese Catholic traders

In 1327 Khan Abu Sa'id murdered Emir Choban (his former tutor): the Mongol shackles were broken. In 1328 Giorgi invited from outlying provinces a number of pro-Mongol nobles to a celebratory *darbazi* convened on Mount Tsivi (overlooking the town of Kaspi): he put them all to death on the spot. He recovered royal landholdings lost to the Church or to usurers. It took him three years to reduce to serfdom, or to expel Kartli's Ossetians, castle by castle, village by village, and even longer to end feuding between the Georgians of the Aragvi and Ksani valleys, whose war to dominate Mtiuleti reached a murderous climax in the battle of Mount Lomisi of 1327. From these hostile tribes who controlled two key routes into the high Caucasus, Giorgi built a loyal army. His Aragvi highlanders and Duke Virsheli of Ksani's men fought the Ossetians, the Dvals (probably Ossetian-speaking Chechens in the Truso valley) and other lawless highlanders resisting serfdom, and secured the passes over the Caucasus. Georgian influence spread to the north Caucasus, to judge by fourteenth-century Hundza inscriptions in Georgian letters.

In 1329 Mikael I of Abkhazia-Imeretia died. Giorgi V occupied Kutaisi, besieged its castle and deposed Mikael's infant son Bagrat I ('the minor'), appointing him duke of the border area of Shorapani. Giorgi V was now king of both Georgias. Qvarqvare, prince of Samtskhe after Sargis Jaqeli's death, saw that resistance to his royal cousin was futile. Thus in 1334 Georgia was fully reunited: Giorgi V won the title of *brts'qinvale* (Brilliant). Much of his kingdom, though free of Mongol taxation since 1330, still lay in ruins. Giorgi set about restoring order and prosperity. It

took seven years' military raids against the highlanders, who killed royal officials or nobles who encroached on their anarchic communities, before all the rebel castles were reduced, and highland warriors recruited into a force to be diverted against the Ossetians of Gori. In 1337 a mint at Qaraghaji in Kakhetia struck coins (albeit for twenty years with Muslim inscriptions). Vineyards and orchards brought the government income. Georgian, Jewish, Armenian, Muslim and Catholic merchants revived Tbilisi's commerce. In 1329 Pope John XXII's letter to Giorgi V called Tbilisi 'a very important, populous, just and rich city'.

Giorgi's success resulted from three decades of peace: the Mongol Ilkhans had split into two warring factions, the Chobanids of Azerbaijan and the Jalairids of Iraq. Giorgi cultivated the sultans of Egypt, securing privileges for Georgian monasteries and pilgrims in Palestine; he communicated not just with the Vatican, but also with Venetian and Genoese merchants; he won Georgia influence in Trebizond and respect in Constantinople.

Giorgi V's brilliance, however, lay in legislation. In 1335, after touring the mountains and taming the tribes of the Aragvi valleys (Mtiuleti), he tamed their barbaric lawlessness by promulgating a code, 'dzeglis dadeba' (laying down the law),[5] punishing their abduction of women and livestock, banditry, paganism, immorality, murder and clan warfare, reconnecting them with central authority. Giorgi's code was based on that of his maternal grandfather, Beka Jaqeli[6] (who had educated him after his father Dimitri II's execution). Instead of highland blood law (under which, for example, fratricide and filicide were not crimes), Giorgi V enforced traditional Georgian 'blood prices': everyone's life was priced by rank, fractions of that price being payable for crippling or disfiguring injuries, from blinding down to the loss of a tooth. Similar penalties punished the abduction of women, an aggrieved husband having, for example, the right for one year to burn down his wife's lover's house and injure the offender, short of killing him. (Insults and minor injuries were compensated by 'disrespect' penalties.) The system resembles modern insurance, except that victims paid no premium and compensation came from perpetrators, not the state. The drawback was that while the poor were deterred from killing the rich, the rich could afford to kill the poor. The blood price of a royal official in the highlands was set at 12,000 tetri if the official was a nobleman, 6,000 if not; killing a village *erovani* (elder) cost 1,200 tetri. In central Georgia a peasant's life was worth between 400 and 1,000 tetri. Murderers of noblemen incurred additional punishments: confiscation of landholdings, excommunication and exile of kinsfolk. Murdering those whose mothers were still alive, like murdering monks and priests, incurred a double penalty. Destroying a neighbour's fort was punished by compulsory rebuilding and half the penalty for murder. Widows of war casualties were to be compensated. Thieves were fined three times the value of the

theft. Giorgi V made few economic decrees, specifying interest on loans (with a Christian bias against usury) from zero to a maximum of 20 per cent regardless of the loan's term.

In the highlands Christianity had evolved into a synthesis of paganism and cult of saints under a shaman-like *khevisberi* (meaning 'gorge elder'): baptism, marriage, funerals, as well as fasting and Mass, had to be reintroduced. The *darbazi* that Giorgi summoned to legislate had no competence in ecclesiastic matters, but the Catholicos himself was charged with redeeming the Aragvi valley, the bishop of Samtavisi – Ksani, and highlanders became serfs of the Church at Domnisi.

More crucial for understanding Georgian governance under Giorgi V, and under his predecessors in the twelfth century, is the extensive *khelmts'ipebis k'aris garigeba* (Regulations of the Monarch's Court), composed around 1334, half of which survives in an eighteenth-century copy.[7] It was adopted by a *darbazi* called by Giorgi V, and updated traditional regulations. It codified rule by an absolute monarch, assisted by a *sabcho* (cabinet) of ministers or viziers, and by a *darbazi*, a legislature of lords, both of which were to be summoned by the king, but unable to overrule him. By restoring the nobility's exclusive rights to ministerial rank, the 'Regulations' superseded the innovations of the Mongols, who had preferred commoners as ministers.

The core cabinet had six ministers. The chief minister, *mtsignobar-tukhutsesi*, was also bishop of Chqondidi (Basil in Giorgi V's time):[8] characterized as 'like the king's father', he directed the other five ministers; supervised the treasury; acted as supreme judge, particularly over appeals and in the affairs of widows and orphans; and once a year signed off all memoranda, and reviewed all appointments. He decided matters of war and peace, controlled state documentation and stamp duty (of which he took a share) on grants of rights and land. Together with the rector of Gelati academy, the chief minister oversaw Church affairs, particularly the 'royal' monasteries of Davit Garesja, Shio-Mghvime and Ancha. Under him were 24 other *mtsignobari* or secretaries. The chief minister had his own miniature cabinet – a treasurer who filed state papers in a leather bag, a court chamberlain who organized state receptions – as well as the usual officials. He had two torchbearers to see him home at night (other ministers had one), and his daily paper allowance was five folios (other ministers had two or three), with salaries and perquisites similarly proportionate. The chief minister had two high-ranking junior ministers: the secretary of the arsenal, who also worked for the commander-in-chief; and the *satsolis mtsignobari* (secretary of the bedchamber), a court official collaborating with the *mandaturtukhutsesi* (chief of police and intelligence).

After the chief minister came the atabag, a rank which now extended beyond rule of a fiefdom. The atabag, often of the Mkhargrdzeli family, had

royal family duties: like the atabag of Samtskhe, he was tutor to the heir of the throne. Although he had no secretariat, he ranked second at cabinet meetings. The third minister was the *amirspasalari* (commander-in-chief). In war he led the army, in peace he trained and equipped it. (Under the Mongols he led the army only if the king was unable, and his post was usually merged with the atabag's.) In cabinet he had first word on military matters and on questions of conceding or exacting territory or tribute. The *amirspasalari* worked with the armoury, which was under the chief minister's remit. The *amirspasalari* had junior ministers who sat in cabinet, silent unless spoken to, for example the *amirakhori* who commanded the cavalry and rode with the king, carrying any gifts the king was distributing. Subordinate to the *amirakhori* were chief couriers, officials in charge of saddlery and tack, horse studs. All these men wore swords when on duty.

The *mandaturtukhutsesi*, literally master of ceremonies, but in fact interior minister, ranked third equal with the commander-in-chief. The post often went to the Jaqelis of Samtskhe: Giorgi v's tutor and maternal grandfather Beka Jaqeli was his first *mandaturtukhutsesi*. This minister, together with his *amirejibi* (chief chamberlain), had untrammelled access to the king, whenever the latter was dressed (and he was not asked to leave if the king decided to go to bed). He carried a police baton on duty, but had to pass this to the *amirejibi* when the king was present. Under him were 300 *mandaturi*, three of them noblemen, the rest of peasant origin, charged with guarding cabinet meetings, policing the palace and with counter-espionage; they also oversaw crown farm-workers, particularly labourers in the gigantic royal vineyards. The ministerial chamberlains brought dispatches to the king, received gifts on behalf of the king and fed donors, provided wine and snacks – walnuts, dips, cheese, chickpeas – for cabinet sessions, ran mobile kitchens, etc. The *mandaturtukhutsesi* had many duties and privileges: he managed royal grants, and he and his underlings took a share (*krtami*, in modern Georgian meaning 'bribe') of the proceeds.

The fifth minister was the *mechurchletukhutsesi* (chief treasurer), who although heading the oldest ministry, ranked lower than the first four. He dealt with customs, income tax, tax on merchants, the supply of money, gems and metal, as well as silver plate, dinner services and valuable fats used for lighting; he watched over city mayors and their expenditure.

The most junior minister was the *msakhurtukhutsesi* (royal chancellor). Usually from the ducal family of Surami, he ran the court and its estates: its flocks of sheep, its wool, travel, luggage, clothes, mules and ready cash. His most important official, the senior treasurer, wore a ring with the king's seal, and all royal documents signed by the chief minister passed through his hands. The chancellor's underlings brought the king bowls of fruit and nuts, wood and water for heating the royal bath; they looked after the king's hunting dogs (hunting took place from January to

the beginning of Lent). Among the royal servants were 700 gentlemen of the bedchamber (of whom only eight were peasants): some, armed with spears, guarded the king's bedchamber; others washed his face and hands, dressed him, brought him supper and read to him. The chancellor and his men were the only officials allowed access to the king when he was in bed.

Cabinet meetings were attended by the king, six ministers and three of their assistants. The king and his ministers sat down in order of rank, at the royal chancellor's command, on gold and linen upholstered chairs around a table. The assistants stood by the wall. The *amirakhori* stood on a raised platform; the secretary of the bedchamber had a desk and took minutes of meetings; the *amirejibi* answered for security (these two were obliged to remain silent throughout). Outside the cabinet room other officials waited for messages to deliver or errands to run. Sessions were strictly secret, and guards kept strangers well away.

Far less frequent but no less important were meetings of the *darbazi*. They were regularly held, probably four times a year including once each at Christmas and Easter. They were also summoned in emergencies, such as in January 1289 when the Mongol Horde demanded King Dimitri's surrender, or in 1328 when Giorgi V had pro-Mongol nobles slaughtered at Mount Tsivi. Sessions were 'big' or 'small', depending on urgency. The *darbazi* was headed by six ministers, and four 'monks', the bishop of Chqondidi belonging to both groups. The four 'monks' included the Catholicos of eastern Georgia (and patriarch of all Georgia), the Catholicos of Abkhazia (all western Georgia) and the *modzghuatmodzghuari* (abbot or rector) of Gelati Academy and Monastery. All Georgia's dukes and bishops, and the abbots of the royal monasteries and of the twelve hermitages of Samtskhe, as well as other senior monk-scholars from Gelati, and major court officials, also participated in the *darbazi*. Like the viziers and dukes, the bishops observed rank strictly: the bishops of Kutaisi and Bedia, traditionally entrusted with royal funerals of kings, took precedence over, say, the bishop of Ishkhani in Samtskhe, while the bishop of Tbeti (*mtebari*) wore a sword and shield.[9] Monasteries abroad were represented by the bishop of Golgotha (from Palestine). As at Church synods, senior bishops sat high on cushions and wore morocco-leather slippers, while junior bishops sat low on wooden seats and wore plain slippers.

The *darbazi* was a legislature, but its laws required royal approval; it made, or ratified appointments; it decided ceremonial matters, for instance the custody of the royal crown and sceptre at Kutaisi, rather than Tbilisi. It commented on, but never disputed, cabinet decisions. After the *darbazi*, senior members, girt with swords as appropriate, seated on wood or cushions, attended a royal banquet, and were escorted home by torchbearers according to their rank, while junior members received rations at their place of work.

All in all, the 'Regulations of the Monarch's Court' portray a sophisticated, efficient feudal monarchy, restored by Giorgi V to the level of the twelfth century. This belated revival could not, however, endure. In 1338 wars between Chobanid and Jalairid Mongols were being fought on the territory of southern Georgia, as Hassan Küchük of Azerbaijan battled with Hassan Buzurg of Iraq: Giorgi V had to drive Azeris out of Armenia. In 1342 Hassan Küchük's brother Ashraf took the Azeri throne, appointed a new Ilkhan Anushirvan and the ensuing bloodbath on its frontiers threatened Georgia.

In the west, likewise, the political climate darkened: Byzantines supplanted Georgians in the empire of Trebizond, where Andronike Comnenos slaughtered his pro-Georgian half-brothers Aza Khutlu and Aghbugha. In July 1341 Giorgi V's army and the Laz of Trebizond managed to depose the empress Irene Palaiologina and put a former nun, Anna Khutlu, daughter of Alexios II and his Georgian wife, a Jaqeli from Samtskhe, onto the Trebizond throne, but Trebizond was then beset by chaos and invading Türkmens. A year later Byzantines and Genoese overthrew and strangled Anna Khutlu. Georgia fought a bloody battle and lost for good all its power over Trebizond. Worse, Georgia's newly found prosperity was shattered in 1343, when an epidemic of anthrax killed not just its cattle herds, but also its populace.

Giorgi V died in 1346. He was succeeded by his son Davit IX (whose mother may be a Trebizond princess). That year the Black Death, bubonic plague, broke out in the Golden Horde and spread across the Black Sea to Anatolia and Transcaucasia. Over two years, Georgia, like much of Europe and the Middle East, probably lost half its population: the plague was worse than any Mongol onslaught. (A curt summary of 1348 by a scribe, Avgaroz Bandais-dze notes: 'The copyist [wrote] this holy book . . . during a year of great poverty, scarcity of parchment, and civic unrest and preoccupation.') Monk-scholars did not give up: in the Ksani valley Largvisi remained even in the 1350s a centre for icon painting, manuscript copying and calligraphy. Most of Georgia's records and manuscripts perished at the end of the fourteenth century: little is known of Davit IX's reign. Unlike his predecessors, whose deeds and misfortunes were graphically recorded by the anonymous 'chronicler' he had no contemporary historian. Georgia was not forgotten: the popes in Avignon sent new bishops to Tbilisi, replacing one when he sided with the Vatican. During Davit IX's reign Georgia struck coins for its neighbours, the short-lived khans of Azerbaijan; in 1349–50 Davit IX paid Ilkhan Anurshirvan an annual tribute of 400,000 dinars not to invade Georgia. Under Davit, Georgia lost Laz territory to Trebizond and much of its southern territories: Kars, Nakhichevan and Garnisi were now the Ilkhan's. The Georgian empire kept its vassal territories, such as Ossetia, only in the north Caucasus. Davit IX married Sindukhtar, daughter of

atabag Qvarqvare II Jaqeli of Samtskhe, and married off a daughter, Gulkhan, later known as Eudoxia, into Trebizond's imperial family.

In 1360 Davit IX's son, Bagrat V, inherited the throne and, to mark his rule over both western and eastern Georgia, was crowned in Kutaisi. Like his father, he ruled a country ravaged by plague, endemic in Georgia until 1366. That year plague took the life of Bagrat V's queen Helena, after she had borne two sons, Giorgi and Davit. The following year Bagrat married Anna, daughter of Alexios III of Trebizond and begat a third heir, Konstantine. (Bagrat also had a daughter, who married a court chamberlain, Kakha Chijavadze, and, when he died, became a nun under the name of Ulupia.) Bagrat V earned the title 'the Great' by his reputation (endorsed by Armenian and Trebizond chroniclers) as a victorious general and archer. His prowess, like his father's reign, has left few records. It may also have been his undoing: in 1385 he allied himself with the Mongol leader Tokhtamysh, who reunited the Golden Horde and, after subduing Russia, crossed the Caucasus to challenge the up-and-coming southern Mongol ruler of Uzbekistan, Timur Lang. Chingiz Khan and the Black Death had crippled Georgia, but Timur Lang would deliver the *coup de grâce*.

11

Timur Lang and the Destruction of Georgia

✠

Between 1386 and his death in 1405, Timur Lang waged a war of conquest, whose range, paranoiac cruelty and destruction were unparalleled until Adolf Hitler.[1] (Only in 1390–91 and 1398 were there peaceful intervals.) Georgia, suffering like every country in Timur Lang's wake between Iran and Anatolia, Russia and Iraq, endured eight invasions. The first, in the early winter of 1386, arose after Bagrat v apparently let Tokhtamysh, khan of the Golden Horde and Timur Lang's chief rival, cross the Caucasus, after burning Moscow, on his way to Tabriz, where Georgians fought for Tokhtamysh. Timur Lang decided to deny his enemy access to Transcaucasia and sent an army which, despite ice and snow, 'filled the valleys and mountains' from Kars to Tbilisi. Apart from a few younger men, Georgian nobles avoided battle and withdrew to their castles, not even rallying round the king in Tbilisi. The capital city withstood six months of siege, Bagrat coming out to counterattack several times a day. Timur Lang had to catapult rocks at Tbilisi's walls before it fell. Bagrat fought on the battlements until 22 November 1386, when Timur fired the first cannon seen in the Caucasus. Timur Lang then promised Bagrat v, his queen Anna (daughter of Emperor Alexios iii of Trebizond) and his son Davit their lives if they surrendered, but let his men loot the city and slaughter the population.

Useful men – artisans – were marched off to Samarkand, Timur Lang's capital, where survivors toiled on Timur's megalomaniac projects. Samarkand was also the destination for 300 camel loads of loot – jewels, silver stripped from icons and the Georgian kings' library. (Though illiterate, Timur Lang liked being read to, and was as fluent in Persian as in Turkish. The library was stored in a mosque behind iron bars and an iron door, but later disappeared.) Timur then celebrated victory with a hunting party, before turning back with his royal prisoners down the river Kura, destroying, but never garrisoning, the castles. Only Shirvan was spared: its shah came out to meet Timur with presents and an offer of submission.

Timur split most of his army into marauding bands, but dispatched the core to the slopes of the Caucasus. The Mongol armies spent the winter of 1387–8 in Karabagh.

That winter in Karabagh Timur Lang, a Shiite who often favoured other sects, announced he would convert Georgia, starting with its king and nobles. Bagrat v was a willing vassal, but a reluctant convert. Eventually they settled on an Islamic sect prevalent in Central Asia, Hanafism, which allowed faith to yield to reason, and alcohol (though not wine) to be consumed. Bagrat feigned conversion and, after exchanging presents, went home with an escort of 12,000 Mongols who were to convert Georgia's population. This missionary expedition suddenly changed into a second invasion: as he neared Georgia, Bagrat sent for his sons Konstantine and Giorgi to rescue him. (In Bagrat's absence, Giorgi was offered the crown, but refused, lest Timur Lang make this a pretext to kill Bagrat.) Giorgi's forces ambushed Timur's men in a gorge, freed his father and withdrew to Tbilisi to await Mongol vengeance. In March 1387 an enraged Timur attacked Tbilisi: this time the population fled to the mountains, and Bagrat made contact with Tokhtamysh's Golden Horde. In the ensuing war, Timur's army suffered badly, but Georgian forces had to withdraw to their castles.

Imeretia's Duke Aleksandre concluded that Kartli was doomed: he crowned himself king of Imeretia at Gelati. Fortunately for Bagrat, news of rebellion in Iran and of imminent attack by the Golden Horde on Azerbaijan induced Timur to retreat. Georgia had seven years of recuperation, while Timur Lang reconquered Chorasmia, chastened the Golden Horde, and conquered Baghdad and Syria, thus almost encircling Georgia. In 1389 the usurping king Aleksandre of Imeretia died: Bagrat reasserted himself as king of all Georgia.

In spring 1393 Timur Lang sent four generals into Samtskhe, the south of Georgia, primarily to reconnoitre and loot while he hunted. The following year, Georgia suffered the third and fourth invasions: the summer invasion ravaged the churches and monasteries of Tao and Samtskhe, bringing Timur gems to present to his newborn grandson. The autumn invasion was worse: it crossed Georgia from south to north, up the Aragvi to the Caucasus ridge: Bagrat and the highlanders fought desperately, neither side taking prisoners. Tokhtamysh, once again, was just over the mountains: finally, Timur routed him on the river Terek and hounded him to the outskirts of Moscow, burning the Golden Horde capital and Astrakhan on his way back in 1395, and then destroying every Christian monument in the north Caucasus. The Mongols then rested in Shirvan, whose shah was the one ruler in Asia trusted by Timur, before returning to Tabriz and Samarkand.

Georgia had four years' breathing space, while Timur Lang conquered India. Bagrat v had died in 1393. In 1399 his heir Giorgi vii (who

had been co-ruler since 1369) rallied every malcontent in Transcaucasia against the tyranny of Timur and of his even more vicious son and viceroy, Miran Shah. Giorgi mobilized north Caucasians, Azerbaijanis (from Shaki) and Georgians; he fortified with Georgian officers the castle of Alinjak in Nakhichevan, famous for resisting Timur's sieges, and rescued (or captured) Alinjak's Jalairid prince Tahir, who had loudly mocked Timur's lameness. At first the Georgians sent Miran Shah's general Seif ad-Din fleeing to Tabriz; a new army and new general was also defeated by the Georgians. But the emir of Shaki, Siid Ali, was killed by an arrow, and his head taken as a trophy first to Miran Shah in Tabriz, then to Timur in Samarkand. Giorgi VII and Tahir retreated to Georgia: Timur was coming this time to Islamicize, incorporate or exterminate the Georgians.

In winter 1399 he breached the eastern borders with 100,000 specially chosen warriors under Sheikh Ibrahim of Shirvan and Siid Ahmed, son of the beheaded emir of Shaki. Given ten days' supplies, they crossed the Kura on a pontoon bridge and hacked paths with machetes through forest trails. Avoiding Georgian sentries, they surprised Kakhetia and Hereti before the populace could flee or hide their property. Despite the surprise, a general, Khimshia, delayed the invaders by tactical evasion: those forewarned hid in forests and caves. Timur's forces looted and burned churches and monasteries; they slaughtered civilians in their hiding places. Fanatical opponents of wine drinking, they uprooted Kakhetia's vineyards; they barked mulberry and walnut trees. Only snowfall and lack of forage stopped them, and they left for Karabagh, taking with them all the sheep they could rustle.

In 1400 Timur Lang held a grand *qurultai*, which decreed the conquest of Georgia. That spring Giorgi VII received Timur's envoy who demanded that Giorgi surrender Prince Tahir, or have his kingdom annihilated. Giorgi politely offered presents, but no concessions: 'It is against our custom to hand over refugees.' Timur declared the Georgians vicious heretics to be eradicated. Again, Giorgi assembled a coalition of north Caucasians and Georgians; they were forced back by Timur's forces at Lake Sevan in Armenia. Timur again ravaged Tbilisi and, when the Georgian army disappeared into the forests on the Imeretian border, combed the entire countryside. (An Armenian chronicler states that traitors showed Timur's men the forest tracks.) Refugees were incinerated with naphtha in the mountain caves; guerrillas climbing cliffs with ropes plunged to their death, rather than surrender. As Timur's historians said, once Mongol forces had left a village, 'not a cock crowed, not a dog barked'. Again, Giorgi VII stood firm at Tbilisi, but the citadel fell, and he withdrew west to Mukhrani. Timur pursued him, stopping in the Ksani gorge to free Muslim prisoners taken by Duke Virsheli, who sheltered the royal family in his castle and showered Timur's forces with arrows. From Ksani Timur climbed the valley, destroying every castle and church. By mid-May 1400 he was heading west, to the lands

owned by Janibeg, the *amilakhori* (master of the king's horse). Janibeg had to surrender: Samtavisi monastery and the surrounding cornfields were torched, the cattle taken. At Gori, Giorgi VII made another stand, but the city was levelled to the ground. Giorgi, 'like a wounded tiger', fled to the forests, while all inner Kartli was laid waste and Ruisi cathedral demolished. Noblemen were tortured, but did not reveal the king's whereabouts. Finally, Timur discovered Giorgi near Kareli, holed up in Dzovreti castle. Dzovreti was considered unassailable, but Timur brought catapults; for a week the armies hurled rocks and tree trunks at each other, and finally the Mongols stormed the gates. In hand-to-hand sword fighting, Giorgi VII slipped away: Timur rounded up the population and slaughtered them at the castle, leaving a mountain of corpses spilling cascades of blood. Castle to castle, Timur pursued Giorgi into Imeretia; Giorgi repeatedly broke through sieges, hiding in even wilder country. Timur's men split into search parties, but eventually gave up the pursuit. Timur fell back on Kartli and then on Samtskhe, besieging atabag Ivane. Countless prisoners were taken as slaves or for ransom; Rkoni and Kvabtakhevi monasteries were demolished, clergy and parishioners locked inside burning churches. Sveti Tskhoveli in Mtskheta, the centre of Georgian Orthodoxy, was badly damaged.

In autumn Timur was distracted by Turkish nomads in Tao, complaining of oppressive Christian generals: the Mongols fell upon Tao. By winter, Georgia had undergone near-genocide. The 60,000 survivors, escorted by 15,000 guards, were marched towards Samarkand; those that fell by the wayside had their heads smashed with rocks. Giorgi VII then re-emerged, riding with Duke Virsheli and the duke of Surami to the Daryal Pass, where the Dvals rebelled. Timur was now in Anatolia, engaged in horrible massacres, burying 4,000 Armenians alive in Sivas as revenge for their alliance with the Ottomans. Later, Timur would confront Egypt and Baghdad. But he sent an army against Georgia again when he heard that Giorgi VII was returning to Nakhichevan to relieve Alinjak castle, which had held out for twelve years against Timur: the garrison, reduced to eating leather belts and stockings, finally surrendered.

In desperation, Giorgi sent envoys, offering to come and meet Timur in person. After Timur's generals had overwintered in Georgia and Timur had retaken Baghdad, Tabriz and Nakhichevan, the tyrant sent Giorgi a demand for tribute, taxes and the *jizia* on non-Muslims. Giorgi sent his half-brother Konstantine as an emissary. Konstantine agreed the truce of Shamkor of September 1401: in exchange for security and the king's safe conduct, Georgia would pay annual tribute; provide troops for Timur; allow Timur's armies transit; treat Muslims and Christians equally; and not practise Christianity on Muslim territory.

In fact, Timur, about to wreak havoc on the Ottomans, wanted peace in Georgia: he gave the Georgian ambassadors fine gowns and a good

send-off, pleased that 'the obstinate have put their heads into the yoke of submission'.

Timur soon broke the treaty: from Karabagh he headed for Ottoman territory through southern Georgia and, finding Tortum castle garrisoned by 200 Georgians, still withholding tax and disrespecting Muslims, assigned 2,500 men to punish them: a seventh invasion. The garrison was hacked to death; Tortum was levelled. Then Timur, to Europe's joy, routed Sultan Beyazit Ildirim at Ankara on 28 July 1402: when he reached the Mediterranean at İzmir, he divided the Ottoman empire among Beyazit's four sons.

Georgia was disobedient and arrogant: Timur prepared a final solution. The Ottoman empire would be in chaos for the next decade: Timur's hands were free. Giorgi's half-brother Konstantine (against the king's wishes) joined atabag Ivane Jaqeli in appeasing Timur with presents and apologies: they were playing for time, hoping to have the 1403 harvest before Timur attacked. Timur first sent Sheikh Ibrahim of Shirvan to assess the king of Georgia's resources, but then decided to attack the castle of Birtvisi, thought to be utterly impregnable, since it stood on a sheer rock in an arid canyon 40 miles southwest of Tbilisi, reachable only by ladders lowered 400 metres onto a narrow track, with no forage or water available for attackers (Birtvisi had been the Arab emir of Tbilisi's stronghold; in 1400 Timur had bypassed it). Birtvisi was defended by Ivane Toreli, 30 *aznauri* (with families) and 150 soldiers; they had pools of fresh water, barrels of wine, cartloads of wheat. With brilliant ingenuity, Timur supervised the siege: he brought in Merkit tribesmen, famous as rock-climbers, from Lake Baikal, and siege engines manned by Chinese. Working day and night, the Mongols built two castles and a wooden tower to monitor and shoot the defenders. They dug wells for water, and drove in sheep to eat. Day and night, catapults showered Birtvisi with rocks; the rocks did no damage, so high was the castle, but the din undermined morale. After seven days and nights, the bombardment stopped: the garrison fell asleep. A Merkit ascended the rock face and tied to a tree a 400-rung ladder made of silk and cotton. In pitch darkness, on 12 August 1403, 52 Merkit volunteers stormed the gates. Timur had the garrison's few survivors killed, and gave their wives and children to his officers (Toreli's wife joined the harem of Sheikh Ibrahim of Shirvan). Birtvisi church became a mosque, and the district, cleared of infidels, was given as a fief to a general.

This siege was, strategically, an irrelevance: it gave King Giorgi VII time to prepare resistance. At a *qurultai* Timur persuaded his weary army that Georgia needed more punishment. He had not yet ravaged western Georgia, but to do so, like the Seljüks 250 years earlier, he needed a route across the Likhi range with pasture, not forests, for cavalry. The Mongols

took the Seljüks' northern detour to Kutaisi, and broke through to Imeretia in three columns, massacring, burning, uprooting, barking trees, levelling and depopulating some 700 villages, farmsteads and monasteries. The route to Abkhazia, however, was blocked by dense forest and bogs impenetrable to heavy cavalry: Timur's generals urged him to seek conquests elsewhere.

Giorgi VII sensed his advantage: Timur was forced to make the first move, but his terms were still severe. He now recognized Georgia as an independent Christian kingdom, but it had to strike for Timur 1,000 gold coins with his image, and give 1,000 horses and a giant ruby. Timur still kept all southern Georgia as his grandson's fief, and returning to Beylagan, destroyed every monastery and church in his path. But by 1404 Georgia had seen off Timur Lang. In February 1405 he died on his way to conquer China; his empire was torn apart by his quarrelsome sons.

While Timur's demented heir Miran Shah fought his own sons Umar and Abu-Bakr for power in Iran, Giorgi VII returned from Imeretia to recover whatever he could. In 1405, after defeating Omar, he took Nakhichevan and Ganja. A Spanish envoy to Samarkand, Ruy Gonzalez Clavijo,[2] reports Giorgi VII ravaging Ani and Erzurum and even raiding Tabriz. Giorgi's army, like all those in the depopulated region, was tiny – just 5,000 men, but it extended Georgia, at least temporarily, to its previous borders. Sheikh Ibrahim of Shirvan likewise filled a territorial vacuum.

But soon, in 1407, Georgia and Shirvan faced new enemies, the Qara-Koyunlu and Ak-Koyunlu ('Black Sheep' and 'White Sheep') nomadic Türkmens. Giorgi VII's men were overrun by a Qara-Koyunlu horde; the king himself was killed before he begot an heir (we know only his queen's name, Nestan-Darejan). Giorgi's survival into his forties was miraculous. Earlier, conspirators had tried to stab him in his bed; he was saved by a squire, Ivane Zevdginidze, who learnt of the conspiracy, got into the king's bed and was spared when the plotters saw the body was not the king's.

Konstantine repatriated his half-brother's body to Gelati. Although the younger of Giorgi VII's surviving brothers, he became king. We know little of his life: these years have no chronicler. There was family conflict: Konstantine I's son and heir, the future Aleksandre I, the Great, sought asylum with atabag Ivane Jaqeli for five years. Konstantine fought against Qara Yusuf, the Qara-Koyunlu chieftain, and collaborated with Egypt and the Ottomans. For fear of Timur, the Egyptians had held Qara Yusuf prisoner: once released, he ravaged Azerbaijan, killed Timur's son Miran Shah and then formed his own kingdom, menacing Shirvan and Georgia. Shirvan's Sheikh Ibrahim sided with Konstantine and Siid Ahmed of Shaki. In 1412 two thousand Georgians, camped on the Kura, were ambushed at night by Qara Yusuf.[3] They surrendered; Sheikh Ibrahim broke his arm as he leapt a trench to escape. Konstantine, his elder half-brother Davit

and 300 other Georgian prisoners so infuriated the Qara-Koyunlu with their haughtiness that they were slaughtered, Qara Yusuf's son Pir-Budaq beheading King Konstantine.

Like his brother, Konstantine perished in his forties, but he left, by his wife Natia Amirejibi, three sons, Aleksandre, Bagrat and Giorgi. After his father's headless body had been repatriated, Aleksandre took the throne. Brought up by his highly educated, and religious, maternal 'Granny' Rusa, and his grandfather Kutsna Amirejibi, Georgian ambassador to Constantinople, Aleksandre was very different from his father and uncle: his mother Natia had made pilgrimages to Ulumbia monastery in Kakhetia in the hope of conceiving, and she adored him. Aleksandre was a peacemaker and rebuilder, particularly of churches: this, rather than any military or political aptitude, earned him the title 'Great'. His first wife Dulandukht (an Orbeliani) died in 1413, after two years of marriage, leaving him two sons, Vakhtang and Demetre. He married again in 1414: his second wife Tamar bore him three sons (Giorgi, Davit and Zaal) and a daughter, name unknown, who married Emperor John IV of Trebizond, when she was ten years old. Aleksandre allegedly made his eldest sons Vakhtang, Demetre and Giorgi co-kings in Kakhetia, Imeretia and Kartli, which, were it true, would make Aleksandre I, the Great, responsible for Georgia disintegrating into three kingdoms. Aleksandre had his fourth son Davit ordained, making him, if the records are correct, Catholicos-patriarch from 1426 to 1430, between the ages of nine and thirteen. Aleksandre was the first Georgian king for two centuries with scholarly interests: he owned the earliest known manuscript (lost in the 1870s) of Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin*.[4]

At first Aleksandre, however, had to use armed force. Together with Shah Ruh of Iran and the rulers of Shirvan and Shaki, he drove the Türkmens out of Karabagh. In 1416 Qara Yusuf, with local Muslims, organized a massacre at Akhaltsikhe, the pretext being the throwing of pig bones into a mosque by a Persian apostate. By 1421 Qara Yusuf's son Iskander, defeated in Azerbaijan, decided to leave Transcaucasia to its own devices. Aleksandre then enforced internal unity: he travelled to western Georgia, where Mingrelia's hereditary lord, Mamia Dadiani, had died trying to subdue Shervashidze-ruled Abkhazia. Mamia's son Liparit apologized; Aleksandre confirmed him as 'Dadiani'; the Shervashidzes, too, submitted to the crown. The atabag of Samtskhe, Ivane Jaqeli, however, took arms against the king, and was captured at Kokhtastavi in Javakheti: the Jaqeli's rights to Samtskhe were curtailed. An apology and oath of loyalty sufficed to win Aleksandre's pardon, but the king punished other rebels more severely before returning to Tbilisi. Aleksandre restored a semblance of unity and Bagrat V's borders, but he never reconquered Ani and only regained Lore in 1431, thanks to the militant Catholicos Teodore II (who

drove out Muslim farmers and was rewarded by the gift of an Armenian village).

Aleksandre's state lacked the power of the viziers (ministers) and institutions like the *darbazi*. Of the old ministerial posts, only the atabag's still carried weight. War had dismantled centralized government; outlying provinces had become centrifugal. The atabag of Samtskhe grabbed independence by splitting the Samtskhe Church from the Catholicos-patriarch in Mtskheta, having his bishops ordained by the Antioch patriarch; the bishop of Atsquri, Samtskhe's cathedral, usurped from Mtskheta the monastic cave complex of Vardzia, a provocative step, since King Aleksandre had in 1419 restored Mtskheta's cathedral to its former glory. From 1420 to 1426 the Antioch patriarch Mark banned any mention of the king of Georgia or the Catholicos of Mtskheta in prayers at Atsquri. The schism was hard to heal.

In Samtskhe the atabags observed the 'Beka-Aghbugha' code of law setting out, according to rank, the blood price for murder, assault and theft (a murderer unable to pay became the serf of his victim's family), as well as the rights of landowners to retrieve fugitive serfs, and of serfs to seek new masters: merchants were well protected, the 'respected' class having a blood price of 12,000 tetri, while serfs were treated harshly, reclaimable by abandoned masters even 30 years later, able to take with them only one ox if they changed masters. Elsewhere the Georgian state was too weak to enforce the law. It was left to bishops and abbots; to judge by the records of Samtavisi Church, they did so arbitrarily and greedily: a fifteenth-century murderer in Kartli had to pay five bullocks, a third of the blood money going to the Virgin for the victim's soul; a fornicator – four cows, and any bastard child to be handed to the Church; a man who married his daughter to an Armenian – three cows.[5] The Church was concerned more with its bishops' seating rank than with its parishioners' welfare. Justice was for sale: in 1432 Aznauri Guralidze, a nervous lord, appealed to the king to set the blood price for any injury done to him – murder, arson, the rape of his wife – at an astronomical price of half a million pieces of silver.[6]

Aleksandre went on rebuilding ruined churches, strategic castles and property abroad, notably Jerusalem's churches. From 1425 to 1440 a special poll tax of 40 tetri per household, virtually the crown's only income, paid for kingdom-wide restoration; many nobles and royal household members, such as 'Granny' Rusa, paid for restoration work with their own funds. The process continued, sometimes enthusiastically, after Aleksandre's death, especially in Kakhetia, where Timur's ravages were lighter and rebuilders less despondent. The drawback was a shortage of money and labour. The country had been stripped of silver and gems by the Mongols. The best artisans were now captives in Samarkand, or had died on the way there; too few peasants survived to feed the workers, and those peasants who

had fled to the mountains returned to destroyed orchards and vineyards. Others were mired in debt by Mongol ransom demands. The famine-stricken sold their land to the Church. Records show land and vineyards changing hands three times in as many years, until they belonged to the Catholicos's brother, or the church at Mtskheta. Serfs deserted masters who could not feed them for ones who could – and were then forcibly returned.

Aleksandre did what he could: he appointed men like Avtandil Zevdginidze as Mouravi (prefect) of Gori, making their land grants hereditary if they served loyally; he resettled highlanders in the deserted valleys, and made the Church – which accumulated wealth when landowners were impecunious – help in the building of new villages. Imeretians were resettled in Kakhetia (as toponyms in Kakhetia show); even Tatars were given oxen and seed corn to encourage them to settle. Armenian refugees from Muslim rule, and the return of Karabagh to Georgian control, brought wealth. The king gave away lands he had confiscated. In 1434 Aleksandre bought Mtskheta's church lands from an *aznauri*, and leased them to the *aznauri*'s descendants. The Church retained enormous landholdings, but was far poorer than a century earlier. Even in 1440, of 45 villages belonging to Mtskheta church, five were still deserted.

Late in Aleksandre's reign, for the first time in two centuries, Georgia participated in western Europe's political and ecclesiastic processes. In response to the Ottoman threat, Pope Eugenius IV in 1438 reconvened the Ecumenical Council of Bishops in Ferrara, and a year later in Florence, trying to bring the Orthodox Churches back into the papal fold. Aleksandre sent three delegates: his brother Giorgi as a layman, Ioane, bishop of Tbilisi (who brought his family and whose expenses were paid in gold by the papacy), and Bishop Grigol, who had plenipotentiary powers, but arrived late. Representatives of Aleksandre's three sons, Vakhtang, Demetre and Giorgi, whom he had now nominated as co-rulers, also came, perhaps to block representation by the upstart atabag or Dadiani who sought papal support for their autonomy. The Georgian delegates, dressed in bejewelled gowns, ranked above even the Russian delegates; Giorgi, as a king's nephew, was offered an interview with Pope Eugenius IV.

The acta of the Council allege that the four main Georgian delegates signed the Act of Union with the Catholic Church, but all the eyewitnesses suggest that they did not sign. Bishop Grigol was one of only three Orthodox metropolitans who took the conservative stand of Mark of Ephesus and the patriarch of Antioch, refusing to compromise over doctrine (the addition of 'Filioque' to the Creed) or the independence of Orthodox patriarchy. Prince Giorgi refused to speak to the pope and left Florence for Rome on the day the Act of Union was to be signed. Another Georgian delegate, apparently Bishop Grigol, morally, if not physically coerced by the Vatican,

gave away his raiment and money and wandered off: he surfaced three months later, mad in Modena, rescued by Bishop Ignati of Trnovo, who shipped him home from Venice. The Russians Semion of Suzdal and Isidor, and the Greek Sylvester Syropoulos, testify that after refusing to sign the Act of Union, Greeks, Russians and Georgians were badly bullied by the papal servants.[7]

The end of Aleksandre's reign was troubled. In 1439 he fell so ill, and was in such agony that doctors despaired. In 1440 he rallied, but had to receive an envoy from the Qara-Koyunlu demanding submission and tribute. The Qara-Koyunlu then invaded, like previous attackers, on Easter Sunday, slaughtering the surprised inhabitants as they celebrated. Jehan Shah of the Qara-Koyunlu took the town of Samshvilde, built a tower of 1,664 severed heads and left with 9,000 prisoners and so much loot that there were no funds left to pay ransom. Jehan Shah then moved on Tbilisi, where the king's court could not agree whether to resist or surrender. The conflict probably led Aleksandre I, the Great, in 1442 to abdicate and become a monk. Renamed Atanasi, he built himself a cottage by the Archangels' chapel at Mtskheta, dying no later than 1449.

Aleksandre failed to clarify the succession. His eldest son Vakhtang IV acceded in 1442, but crown princes Demetre and Giorgi were still co-kings. Vakhtang reigned four years; his wife Sitikhatun Panaskerteli, died two years before him, leaving no heir: his only recorded action was a fierce, but inconclusive battle with Jehan Shah of the Qara-Koyunlu at Akhaltsikhe. He was politically too weak to arrest rebels like the nobleman Taqa Panaskerteli, whom he paid off by appointing him *mouravi*.

For unknown reasons, Vakhtang was succeeded by Giorgi VIII, Aleksandre's third son: perhaps Vakhtang meant Demetre to rule only Imeretia, and Giorgi, the second brother, to reign in Kartli and Kakhetia. In 1446 Giorgi VIII fought to enforce countrywide dominion. His writ ran in Imeretia, Kartli and Kakhetia, but other provinces were now a patchwork of principalities, each with its hereditary ruler, army and foreign policy. Tbilisi could no longer govern outside Kartli, by force or by patronage.

Samtskhe was far advanced along this path: in 1447 atabag Aghabugha, attacked by his brother, Qvarqvare II, took refuge with Giorgi VIII. After civil war, Aghabugha was reinstated. But the atabag died in 1451, and Qvarqvare II became legitimate atabag. For 47 years this vindictive Machiavellian ruler subjected his principality only to himself. Like his father Ivane, he hived off Samtskhe's Church. Vardzia was confiscated; Mtskheta could not ordain Samtskhe bishops; neither king nor Catholicos were mentioned in prayers. A Greek metropolitan imported new clergy, refugees from Antioch and Jerusalem.[8]

Mtskheta's new Catholicos-patriarch, Davit III Gobeladze, reacted severely: he went to Samtskhe, excommunicated the bishop of Atsquri,

and defrocked priests the bishop had ordained. Parishioners, fearing mortal sin, boycotted Samtskhe priests at baptisms, marriages and funerals; the impoverished clergy made their bishops go to Mtskheta, declare loyalty to King Giorgi VIII and the Mtskheta patriarch and break with the Greek metropolitan. Qvarqvare II thus lost this battle with the crown.

In 1451 Giorgi was desperate for western alliances. The Byzantine emperor Constantine X, twice widowed, sent his aide Sphrantzes to Trebizond and Georgia to find a bride. Seeing the portraits Sphrantzes brought back, Constantine selected a daughter of Giorgi VIII: haggling began over the dowry. Giorgi explained that in Georgia no dowries were paid: the bride's parents expected a bride price – at royal marriages the chamberlain would read, with sword unsheathed, a list of villages given to the bride. In the end Giorgi agreed to give 56,000 ducats, jewels, fine furniture and clothes, plus an annual endowment of 3,000 ducats. This would have bankrupted the Georgian treasury had the wedding gone ahead. (The unfortunate bride may have been the daughter who thirteen years later was married off to Grand Duke Vashiq Shaburis-dze). Constantine X, however, died fighting the Ottomans on Constantinople's battlements. Disappointment over this marriage overshadowed whatever horror the Georgians felt at the end of Byzantium, their last major ally (the empire of Trebizond lingered on for another eight years). Georgia was now completely encircled by Muslim states.

The fall of Constantinople induced Georgian rulers to show some unity: in 1452, Giorgi's last surviving brother, Demetre, was killed by his horse when hunting; Qvarqvare II kept the peace. In 1456 a papal nuncio, Ludovico da Bologna, visited Georgia to report on its kingdom and its Church; he assured the pope that the Georgian Church had not strayed from Catholicism, but he was otherwise pessimistic: 'They have quarrelled with great mutual hatred, and waged war [on each other].'[9] Pope Calixtus then asked the Georgians to choose a prelate to lead a delegation to Rome. In September 1459, after the 1458 Mantua congress had refused to act, Pope Pius II appealed for a new anti-Ottoman crusade. By November, fervent coordinated responses had come from Giorgi VIII and Qvarqvare II, addressed to Pius II and his deceased predecessor Calixtus III; to Pasquale Malipiero, doge of Venice; and to Philip III of Burgundy. Qvarqvare II (who longed to liberate Jerusalem) wrote:

> I've made peace with all my neighbours, decided to use all my strength and resources against the Turks . . . we were persuaded to this union by our Patriarch's authority and the Pope's letters. We promise to expel the enemy and be masters of Anatolia in one summer. We leave Greece for you to conquer, which should be easy. Don't miss this opportunity, for if by

misfortune you do, we'll do nothing . . . our treaty and alliance will be voided.

The Georgians promised 120,000 men – 40,000 from Georgia, 30,000 from Trebizond, 20,000 from Christian Armenia, 20,000 from Samtskhe, 10,000 from Sabediano (modern-day Mingrelia) – not to mention contributions from Guria and the port of Anakopia, as well as Persian forces under Uzun Hassan, who coveted the Ottoman city of Bursa. The allied army would clear Anatolia of Turks, while a European navy and army drove them out of Europe.

Ludovico da Bologna returned to Georgia, across the Black Sea, via the Danube through Hungary, to escort a delegation of Georgians – Bishop Nikoloz of Tbilisi, Kasadan Qarchikhan of Mingrelia – Trebizondians and Armenians, and Mahmed, Uzun Hassan's envoy. In 1460 they met the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick in Vienna, and went to Venice, before travelling to Florence, where the Georgians addressed the Ecumenical Council in Latin. In Rome Pius II was confused by his guests' remits: he mistook Giorgi VIII for 'king of the Persians', and Bagrat, duke of Imeretia (Giorgi VIII's brother), for Pankratius, 'king of the Iberians'. Face to face, Pius backed off, apologizing for failing to get western support; he sent the delegation on a wild goose chase across Europe. By 1461 they were in Paris, only to find the militant Charles X dying, and the new king Louis XI very unwarlike; Philip of Burgundy, whom the Georgians met in Saint Omer, was worried about the fate of his crown if he left for a crusade. After a reception by Ghent's nobility, the utterly disillusioned delegation returned to Paris for Louis XI's coronation on 15 August, and then set off home.

A show of unity had failed; internecine strife resumed. In 1462 Qvarqvare II declared war on Giorgi VIII, called on Uzun Hassan's support, and won. But Uzun Hassan's men, according to a Syriac account, then killed Samtskhe's clergy and wrecked its churches. The following year Bagrat, who as the king's nephew felt cramped as mere duke of Kutaisi *samokalako* (urban region), was encouraged by Qvarqvare to rebel: he defeated Giorgi VIII at Chikhori (somewhere in Imeretia), proclaiming himself Bagrat II, king of Imeretia, and buying support by freeing Dadiani of Mingrelia and other minor princes from taxation.

Qvarqvare II then offered Ajaria and part of Lazistan to Kakhaber of Guria, who helped him kill or expel Samtskhe's dissident noblemen. Qvarqvare then made Samtskhe a nation state by minting silver coins at Akhaltsikhe: the first crude specimens had just a fish on the obverse; later they added Qvarqvare's name, in accidentally reversed letters, and finally, Qvarqvare's facsimile signature.

In 1465 Giorgi VIII invaded Samtskhe. Qvarqvare ambushed the Kartlian army at Lake Paravani and held the king prisoner. Giorgi's nephew,

the future Konstantine II, bitterly complaining of Qvarqvare's treachery, escaped to Gori, which Qvarqvare then besieged, forcing Konstantine to withdraw to Kutaisi. While imprisoned, the chronicle alleges, Giorgi was induced to wed Qvarqvare's daughter Tamar, although the king was still married to his second wife Nestan-Darejan; Tamar bore him a son and two daughters (Vakhtang, Ketevan and Elene), but these children then vanish from history.

Qvarqvare II's policy was to stop Imeretia and Kartli from dominating Georgia. In 1466 Bagrat II of Imeretia exploited Giorgi VIII's imprisonment to leave Kutaisi for Kartli and was crowned as Bagrat VI of all Georgia, bribing the Catholicos-patriarch Davit IV with two peasant households and their property. Bagrat had thus justified his claim to the pope to be 'Pankratius of the Iberians now called Georgians'. Bagrat's sudden elevation made Qvarqvare II release Giorgi VIII so that the newly freed king would drive out the usurper. But Giorgi VIII had no supporters left in Tbilisi, and moved to Kakhetia, where he began life again as Giorgi I of Kakhetia.

Georgia now shattered. There were three kingdoms: Imeretia and Kartli under Bagrat VI; Kakhetia under Giorgi; and Samtskhe under Qvarqvare II (who now began using the title of *mepe*, meaning 'king'). There were several principalities: from 1470 the Dadiani's Mingrelia, then known as Sabediano, from Batumi in the south, to Abkhazia. Abkhazia under the Shervashidze family, and Svanetia, whose clans recognized the Gelovanis as their chieftain, were now outside the law. Not just outlets overseas, but even the unity of Imeretia and Kartli was endangered: Bagrat VI moved Imeretia's Church from Mtskheta's control to the authority of Jerusalem and Antioch's patriarch Michael, and had him consecrate Iovakime, bishop of Bedia, as Catholicos. The king's writ still extended to Imeretia, but the Mtskheta patriarch's did not. In 1468 Bagrat perpetuated the split by acknowledging Konstantine, his first cousin once removed, as future king of Kartli, while his own surviving son Aleksandre would inherit Imeretia.

We have a rare outside picture of Georgia in the 1470s from two Venetian envoys, Giosafat Barbaro and Ambrosio Contarini.[10] Venice, faced by the Ottoman empire across the Adriatic, was the one European state actively seeking an anti-Ottoman coalition with Transcaucasia and Iran. Barbaro and Contarini, on their way (with another envoy, Giovan-Maria Angiolello) to Tabriz for talks with Uzun Hassan, crossed Georgia. Their reports were grim. Not only was Uzun Hassan uncooperative – Georgians stood aside in 1473 when he fought the Ottomans, and he blamed them for his severe losses; he had also turned on Samtskhe and Kartli in two campaigns of 1473 and 1474, invading Lore, the Baratashvilis' territory. In 1477 Uzun feigned a new anti-Ottoman campaign, but veered north and, with 500 pathfinders leading 35,000 soldiers and their families, literally

blazed a trail through Imeretia's forests, before besieging Tbilisi. The capital's population, already depleted by a new plague epidemic in 1475, fled; Uzun Hassan took the city without a fight. Bagrat VI and Qvarqvare II both sued for peace, but could not raise the 16,000 ducats that Uzun Hassan demanded. They offered instead four very fine Badakhshan rubies: Uzun Hassan's first reaction was to loot Samtskhe, but he entrusted the jewels to Giosafat Barbaro's expertise. Barbaro confirmed that the rubies were worth 16,000 ducats, to which Uzun Hassan retorted that 'Venice overvalues Badakhshan rubies', and looted Atsquri cathedral's precious icon. Bagrat and Qvarqvare then raised the money, ransomed the icon, promising annual tribute, and Uzun Hassan left with countless prisoners, having established Persian garrisons in both Tbilisi and Lore. Uzun Hassan died in 1478, and his heirs quarrelled. But Tbilisi was attacked by another Türkmen-Persian force, and the Baratashvilis fought in vain to recover Lore.

The weakened, fragmented Georgia of the mid-1470s disappointed the Venetians. Kartli and Imeretia, Barbaro and Contarini reported, could offer the visitor only wine, fruit, bread and mutton. Kakhetia, spared Uzun Hassan's invasions, was relatively orderly, and its king Aleksandre (who claimed all Georgia) was 'athletic, handsome, merciful, gentle and humble'. Georgia, however, was plagued by banditry, some of the bandits being priests. Nobody was safe: Lodovicus, patriarch of Antioch, was murdered on his way to Abkhazia. Kartli's inhabitants seemed 'handsome', but their living conditions were poor. Tbilisi, visibly once a great city, was 'unpeopled and impoverished', although its Metekhi castle seemed strong. The royal palace offered visitors no hospitality. Cities like Gori, Sukhumi and Batumi were reduced to mere citadels; Kutaisi, capital of Imeretia, was 'a little town'; Poti's port was now overgrown with forest. Towns like Dmanisi and Samshvilde had ceased to exist, and were just a lord's residence. Mingrelians and Gurians were 'paupers', eking out a living by selling coarse linen, wax and honey. They subsisted on millet, salted fish and bad wine, and dressed in cloth woven from nettles and hemp. They seemed 'backward, ignorant and lazy paupers', malnourished in a fertile land. 'Much annoyed by the Georgians who are as mad as the Megrelians', having 'a great desire to get out of that accursed country', the Venetians arrived in Guria in 1475: the 'Bediani' had died and Bagrat's cavalry and infantry had come in to establish Liparit Dadiani and Shamadavla as rulers of Sabediano and Abkhazia respectively. The Venetians were impressed by Qvarqvare II and his wife Dedisimedi, then in mourning for their young son Bahadur. 'All the neighbours took note of Gorgora', the Venetians said of Qvarqvare. The king of Imeretia displeased them when they met him in July 1474: Bagrat, 'a tall, dark-haired, Tatar-featured forty-year-old', treated the envoys rudely; his secretaries made an inventory of their baggage and took any items they thought the king might fancy, Bagrat himself taking 100 gold coins from Contarini.

The Venetians' report is consistent with Georgian evidence: the difficulty Bagrat and Qvarqvare had raising 16,000 ducats in 1477, when only 25 years earlier Giorgi VIII could promise 56,000 ducats as his daughter's dowry, betokens a beggared realm. Bagrat VI's grasping nature had already earned him the title 'Bagrat the Mean': he made nobles pay in cash or wine for confirmation of their landholdings or office; he refused to make fiefs hereditary, thus imposing an inheritance tax on the nobility. Under multiple rulers, the peasantry was poorer, serfdom harsher, taxation heavier and towns emptier. The shoddy buildings of the end of the fifteenth century testify to a country lacking artisans and money, while Georgian monasteries abroad depended on private donors. Money was still minted, but little circulated, and only in towns.

Nevertheless, Georgia was no cultural desert: in the 1480s, in a chapel he built by Qintsvisi cathedral, Zaza Panaskerteli-Tsitsishvili, a retired royal official, compiled a *karabadini* (book of medical treatment), fusing Galenic and Sumerian medicine with Georgian folklore, and also edited a translation of St John Chrysostom's doctrines.

In 1478 Bagrat VI died, leaving a country still more divided and demoralized. His son Aleksandre attempted to crown himself King in Imeretia, but nobody came to the coronation. His cousin once removed, Konstantine II, a grandson of Aleksandre I, the Great, took both Imeretia's and Kartli's thrones; in 1479 he came to Imeretia, won the Dadiani of Mingrelia's support and demoted Bagrat's son Aleksandre to Duke of the mountainous western province of Racha and Lechkhumi, with the right to reside in Kutaisi castle. Konstantine II could not, however, reincorporate Kakhetia, since another Aleksandre, son of Giorgi I of Kakhetia (formerly Giorgi VIII of Georgia), had inherited that throne in 1476.

Konstantine II soon faced rebellion: in 1483 Qvarqvare II declared war on him and defeated the royal forces at Ardeti on the river Prone. The pretext was maltreatment in Kartli of a Samtskhe silk merchant; Qvarqvare's venom was directed at certain families, the Tsitsishvilis, Shalikashvilis and Machabelis, rather than King Konstantine II. In 1484 the demoted former heir, Aleksandre of Racha, used the conflict to seize Kutaisi, this time successfully crowning himself king of Imeretia. Konstantine II turned his army against the Imeretian usurper, but had to abandon the campaign when in 1486 a Türkmen chieftain, Yakub Khan, invaded Samtskhe with cannon (Georgian forces still had no firearms) and took Atsquri without a battle. Akhaltsikhe was seized and depopulated: the atabag's son Manuchar had refused to defend Akhaltsikhe, nor did the bishop of Atsquri defend his cathedral city. A furious Qvarqvare II sentenced Manuchar and others to death for treason, but reduced the sentence to deportation and excommunication. To strengthen his hand, Qvarqvare contacted an old friend, Svimon, bishop of Trebizond, who

had in 1475 made a pilgrimage to Mt Athos to pray for the soul of Qvarqvare's son Bahadur. Svimon agreed to be Catholicos of Samtskhe and bishop of Atsquri.

Qvarqvare II and Konstantine II were now in the same boat, but they failed to coordinate resistance. Konstantine II had been invited by Liparit Dadiani of Mingrelia to bring an army and help overthrow King Aleksandre of Imeretia. Aleksandre was on the run when news reached Konstantine that the Türkmen Khalil Beg had invaded Kartli. Khalil Beg built two castles of his own in lower Kartli. The doughty Baratashvili family fought back; after looting Kojori castle, whose garrison quietly slipped away to Tbilisi at night, the Türkmen departed. Further waves of Türkmen nomads, seeking lands to settle, followed; at the end of February 1489 the Türkmen captured Tbilisi. Qvarqvare II now changed sides and joined Aleksandre of Kakhetia: they stood idly by, while Konstantine II fought Türkmens, and Aleksandre of Racha again made himself king of Imeretia. The forces of the Javakhishvilis and Baratashvilis drove the Türkmen-Persian forces from Tbilisi.

Blatant mutual treachery sickened even Georgia's self-serving nobility. They saw the country destroying itself; in 1490 clerics and laymen met in a *darbazi* called by King Konstantine II. They concluded that peaceful reunification was unfeasible, and armed force self-defeating, so attached was each region to its own ruler and way of life: they postponed a united Georgia under Kartli 'until God should be minded'. But they agreed a non-aggression pact and on demarcating internal borders. In 1490, three kings and a prince signed a treaty. Konstantine II of Kartli, Alexandre of Kakhetia and Qvarqvare II, atabag of Samtshke, agreed that henceforth Georgia should consist of the kingdoms of Kartli, Imeretia (including Svanetia) and Kakhetia and the pricipality of Samtshke. In addition, under Imeretian suzerainty, there should be a principality of Mingrelia, including Abkhazia, and the principality of Guria. These states had boundaries like today's regions, but Kakhetia then was larger, extending from the high Caucasus east of the Aragvi valley – modern Pshavia, Khevsureti and Tusheti – well into today's Azerbaijan, while Samtskhe was then a triangle that reached the outskirts of Erzurum and Kars. Inasmuch as the three main kingdoms were in the hands of the same Bagratid dynasty, and the principalities of Guria and Mingrelia, for a while, acknowledged Aleksandre of Imeretia's suzerainty, there was unity. The worst consequence of this concord was the break-up of the Georgian army: ever since Davit the Builder created a permanent army, it had consisted of four 'banners', in which men of Samtskhe formed the vanguard, Kartli the centre, Imeretia the right flank, and Kakhetia-Hereti the left flank. Now each kingdom had its own four 'banners': Imeretia's were assigned to the feudal lords of the plains, of Argveti, Racha and Lechkhumi; Davit X, Konstantine II's successor, also made Kartli's army hostage to the nobility; only Kakhetia inherited from

Giorgi I a royal army, whose banners were led by four bishops appointed by the king.

Once political concord was reached, it was again time, as in 1459, to seek support from other Christian states. In 1491 Aleksandre I of Kakhetia sent a letter and secret messages to Tsar Ivan III of Russia, but Russia, still blocked from the Caucasus and the Caspian by Tatar tribes, could not respond. Konstantine II had far more success. In 1492 Nilos, his ambassador to Egypt, met in Jerusalem Martin Diaz de Auxse, the Spanish ambassador, who told him of Ferdinand and Isabella's capture of Granada and expulsion of the Moors. Nilos persuaded Martin Diaz to accompany him to Tbilisi. Konstantine II, despite the death of his queen Tamar that year, eagerly fantasized about mounting a two-pronged attack from Morocco and Georgia to rid the Middle East of Islam; Konstantine dispatched the two envoys, with another diplomat, Zakare, and two servants, to Spain: they travelled via the Black Sea and Poland to avoid Ottoman interception. The delegation carried letters for Pope Alexander VI and for Ferdinand and Isabella, complaining of Muslim oppression. Konstantine II considered converting to Catholicism: he asked Pope Alexander for a copy of the Bull of 1439 justifying papal supremacy and the addition of 'Filioque' to the Creed. Not until 1495 did Konstantine receive responses from Ferdinand and Isabella: the western monarchs explained that it had taken 800 years to expel the Muslims from Spain and, while they intended to invade North Africa, they offered meanwhile only prayers and moral support. In 1496 Pope Alexander also replied: 'We are working ceaselessly to keep a peace between Christian princes and thus be certain of reconquering Constantinople and Jerusalem: you have sent your ambassador Nil to bring back the definition of faith decided at the council of Florence. We are sending it today, sealed.' Four years later, the last missionaries reached Tbilisi from Rome, before the Ottomans sealed the borders.

This lily-livered response to Georgia's appeals snuffed out the optimism of the 1490s.

12
Fratricide

✠

By 1500 the Georgian kingdoms and principalities were squeezed between two militant empires, the Ottomans to the west and the Safavid shahs under Ismail I (son of the first Safavid sultan, grandson of Uzun Hassan and great-grandson of Emperor John IV of Trebizond), who was making an all-Iranian Azeri empire. Georgia could only be a vassal or ally of the stronger and fight the weaker of the two giants trying to dominate Transcaucasia. Ottoman armies and bureaucracy, or Iranian armies under wild Türkmen *kizilbash*, both equipped with musketry and artillery, were equal menaces.

Shah Ismail attacked from Erzincan in the southwest. In 1498 atabag Qvarqvare II of Samtskhe died; his son Kaikhosro, memorable for spirituality, died after two years and was succeeded by his equally pious brother Mzechabuk. Such unwarlike atabags tempted Shah Ismail to loot Samtskhe, if only to distract attention from his main quarry, the Ottoman's vassal state Shirvan. In 1500 Ismail inveigled the atabag of Samtskhe, King Konstantine II of Kartli and King Aleksandre of Kakhetia, into attacking Ottoman territory around Tabriz. As a precaution, Ismail had Aleksandre of Kakhetia send his son Demetre to newly conquered Shirvan, where the prince negotiated a peace agreement. Ismail promised Konstantine, once Tabriz was captured, to cancel the tribute he still paid the Ak-Koyunlu Türkmens. Each Georgian ruler contributed 3,000 men to Ismail's 7,000: by 1503 they enabled him to recapture Nakhichevan from the Ottomans. But Ismail broke his promise, and made Kartli and Kakhetia his vassals.

In 1505 Konstantine II of Kartli died: his son Davit X could not wrench Kartli free from a shah who ruled from the Amur-Darya to the Euphrates. Davit's neighbours sensed his weakness. In 1509 Aleksandre of Imeretia seized Gori and annexed all northwest Kartli, retreating only when the Ottomans sent tribesmen from Trabzon to attack Imeretia in his absence, torching Kutaisi and Gelati monastery and taking prisoners

and booty to Anatolia.[1] (Aleksandre died in 1510 and his fifteen-year-old son Bagrat III inherited Imeretia.)

Aleksandre, king of Kakhetia, was friendlier than his Imeretian namesake to Kartli, as well as to Shah Ismail, but his son and heir Giorgi, like many Kakhetian lords, saw a chance to expel Davit X from Kartli and reunite eastern Georgia under Kakhetian rule. Giorgi's army raided Kartli; his father fulminated. Giorgi killed his father, gouged his brother Demetre's eyes out (Demetre's wife and children fled to Kartli) and crowned himself Giorgi II 'King of Imeretia, Abkhazia, Armenia, Kartli and Kakhetia'. For two years the infamous 'Evil Giorgi' plagued Kartli. (On one incursion, however, Giorgi showed remorse: Mtskheta records show him taking Communion from Catholicos Dionise, Archbishop Malakia and Father Ioane of Alaverdi; atoning 'for my sinful deed', he gave the Catholicos two villages and exemption from all taxation.) But Evil Giorgi's depredations continued. Davit X hid from him in Ateni fortress. In 1512 Davit's frustrated younger brother Bagrat took over the army in Inner Kartli, calling himself Mukhranbatoni (lord of Mukhrani), founding a principality and a new royal line just 40 miles west of Tbilisi. In 1513 Bagrat Mukhranbatoni ambushed Evil Giorgi, who, returning to Kakhetia with booty, had wandered off hunting. Evil Giorgi was murdered in prison.

Davit X, who 'hated battles and disorder', showed unwonted enterprise: he announced the annexation of Kakhetia to Kartli and outlawed Evil Giorgi's heirs. Giorgi's widow Elene and son Levan were hastily hidden by Garsevan Choloqashvili, Elene's kinsman and chamberlain: according to one account, a search party led by the duke of Ksani and Prince Amilakhori was entertained at Choloqashvili's castle, was deceived by Levan's disguise as a servant, and believed Garsevan Choloqashvili's solemn oath: Levan was then moved to Ochonisi castle on the upper Iori.

Before Davit X could catch Levan, war erupted between the Ottomans and Shah Ismail. Kartli and Samtskhe were disputed territory and potential allies for both sides. In 1514 the Ottomans withdrew from their prize, Tabriz. As they crossed the rivers of southern Georgia and Armenia, they were mercilessly harassed by Imeretian cavalry. In 1515, however, the Ottomans made the Iranians surrender western Armenia and Mosul. Sultan Selim I went on to conquer Syria and Arabia. Shah Ismail formed a coalition with Egypt and the Euphrates states and courted Georgian friendship.[2] In Samtskhe he won over the new atabag, Qvarqvare III, but Qvarqvare's pro-Ottoman uncle Manuchar forced Qvarqvare to flee Samtskhe to Nakhichevan and seek Ismail's help. The shah sent General Div-Sultan Rumlu 'to cleanse Georgia of filth'; after a battle at Tmogvi, Manuchar was defeated and Qvarqvare III reinstalled. Ismail and Div-Sultan Rumlu naturally wanted to keep Kartli and Kakhetia submissive. After overwintering in Nakhichevan, in 1518 the Iranians and Qvarqvare

III's army entered Kartli, occupying Gori and Surami fortresses. Davit I yielded, and sent his second son Ramaz with gifts to Div-Sultan Rumlu.

Ramaz brought back presents and conditions for his father: Kartli had to pay Iran 300 camel-loads of silk per annum, as exorbitant as the tribute exacted from Levan of Kakhetia and Qvarqvare III of Samtskhe. (Imeretia, so far, remained exempt.) While Davit X appeased the shah's *kizilbash*, Kakhetia seceded from Kartli. Levan emerged from hiding and, aged thirteen, was crowned king. In 1520, with Ismail's assent, Davit's forces crossed the Gombori Pass into Kakhetia, nearly catching Levan at Maghnari. Levan's garrison, besieged by Kartlians, was starving, when an Ottoman army entered Samtskhe. Davit suppressed the news and sent an archbishop and master of the king's horse (*amilakhori*) to negotiate a surrender, but the archbishop blurted out to the garrison the encouraging prospect of Ottoman rescue. The garrison stood firm, while Davit X raced to Kartli to repel the Ottomans. When he returned to Kakhetia, he lost a battle at Sighnaghi.

Whenever Davit attacked a neighbour, others took advantage. In 1520 Mamia I of Guria, Qvarqvare III of Samtskhe and Bagrat III of Imeretia invaded Kartli in concert. Ostensibly, they wanted only to stop Davit X's aggression. Defeated by Qvarqvare, Davit retreated to Tbilisi for reinforcements, and intercepted his enemy in the Nichabi gorge near Mtskheta. Further south, Bagrat Mukhranbatoni and the Amilakhori moved against Mamia of Guria. Mamia urged Davit to negotiate with Levan, so that all Georgia could confront the Ottomans. Pressed by the Catholicos and many nobles, Davit agreed borders and a defence policy with Levan. Shah Ismail was delighted by his vassals' unity: he had Div-Sultan Rumlu bring the two kings and the atabag to a darbazi at Nakhichevan, and gave them fine new gowns. The Iranians promised the Georgians autonomy, as long as they sent tribute and military support.

Ismail reserved his wrath for his vassals. Levan of Kakhetia, precociously enterprising, befriended the Dagestani Shamkhal (king) of Tarku, Qaramusal; they executed the shah's vassal, Hassan Bey, ruler of Shaki in Azerbaijan, and took the city. Ismail mounted a punitive expedition, repossessing Shaki and raiding Gremi, Kakhetia's capital. Levan challenged his neighbours and suzerain, but kept Kakhetia free of invasion for many decades. His subjects prospered and overlooked his vices. He was 'a lover of whoring and fornication'; Tinatin, a Gurian princess who bore him several children, divorced him and entered Shuamta nunnery, built at her instigation and on her dowry. There she would be buried, she requested, far from her ex-husband. Levan then married the Shamkhal of Tarku's daughter.

In his last years, Davit X of Kartli was inspired by his adolescent son Luarsab's prowess. When Ismail attacked Kartli in 1522 for insubordination, Davit first sued for peace. But a summons by the shah and an

order to accept Islam outraged Davit. As Ismail prepared an invasion, Davit requested help from Kakhetia, Samtskhe and the north Caucasus and fortified Tbilisi. Led by young Luarsab, the Georgians defeated the Iranian vanguard, but the shah's guard ambushed them in the rear. While Davit fetched reinforcements from Inner Kartli, the shah besieged Tbilisi. The garrison commander was bribed to surrender, the city was looted, its churches burned and a mosque was hurriedly erected on Avlabar bridge, the only river crossing. After this exemplary punishment, Ismail turned south to Samtskhe and home.

When in 1524 Ismail died and the ten-year-old Tahmasp became shah, Iran's vassals took advantage of the bloodbath and confusion that preceded every new enthronement. Davit X recaptured Tbilisi and took possession of Aghjaqala (formerly Gagi), the Iranians' base in south-east Kartli. That year, however, Davit's brothers forced him to abdicate: as Damiane, he became a monk, dying in 1526. His brother Giorgi IX held the throne very briefly: Davit X's son Luarsab immediately asserted his rights. Luarsab married Tamar, daughter of Bagrat III of Imeretia, who put him onto Kartli's throne. Bagrat's price was extortionate: he annexed to Imeretia all Kartli west of the river Prone (from the Likhi mountains to the Kura), including Surami and Borjomi. Dethroned, Giorgi IX, like his brother, took holy orders, as Gerasime.

Once enthroned, Luarsab reclaimed lost territory. Opportunity came from a new wave of Ottoman aggression: Sultan Süleyman ('the Magnificent', 1520–66), his conquests in the Balkans assured, turned again to Transcaucasia and, by 1533, was again at war with Iran, taking Tabriz, Baghdad and the Persian Gulf. Bagrat III of Imeretia suffered worst: the Ottomans considered western Georgia their sphere, and attacked by proxy using Laz tribesmen from the southwest and newly Islamicized Circassians from the northwest. The Circassians particularly wanted slaves from Abkhazia and Mingrelia to sell in Istanbul. Bagrat combined with Mamia of Guria and Mamia Dadiani (of Mingrelia) in a novel enterprise, a naval attack on Circassian ports. The landings turned to fiasco when the Dadiani quarrelled with his allies and the Mingrelians deserted; a son of Mamia of Guria was killed, while Mamia, his brothers and many men were captured and had to be ransomed by the Catholicos of Abkhazia-Imeretia. At the same time, Bagrat was repressing his own nobility's rebellions and invading Samtskhe (to prevent the Ottomans invading Imeretia via Samtskhe). In August 1535 Imeretia, Guria and the Dadiani finally cooperated at Akhalkalaki: Rostom of Guria captured atabag Qvarqvare III and delivered him to Bagrat: Qvarqvare died in prison, and Rostom of Guria was awarded Ajaria and Samtskhe's Laz coastline. The Ottoman threat induced Bagrat to overcome his hostility to Luarsab: he helped him take Javakheti, hitherto eastern Samtskhe, and gave him back northwest Kartli.

Bagrat and Luarsab now faced not only an Ottoman onslaught, but also the furious dispossessed Samtskhe lords, whose leader Otar Shalikashvili smuggled Qvarqvare's infant son, Kaikhosro II, to Istanbul and asked the sultan to help reclaim his principality. In 1536 the Ottoman army came, took more loot than it could carry, but did nothing to reinstate the atabag. For a decade, Samtskhe ceased to exist: its lands were divided between Rostom of Guria, kings Bagrat of Imeretia and Luarsab of Kartli, while the Ottomans Islamicized the southwest. Then the Ottomans left to fight in Europe and Egypt. Shah Tahmasp could now tighten the ring round eastern Georgia, first incorporating Shirvan as a province of Iran.

Tahmasp's moves in 1538 effectively united the three Georgian kings: Imeretia's Bagrat III, Kartli's Luarsab and Kakhetia's Levan. In 1541 Tahmasp sent 12,000 men north from Karabagh to Tbilisi. They attacked at dawn, knowing that King Luarsab and Queen Tamar were in Mtskheta burying their infant son. *Kizilbash* forces sneaked into the leaderless city and set it alight; half then withdrew to ravage Lower Kartli; the other half besieged the citadel, bribing the commander with an offer of safe conduct to open the gates. Then, after garrisoning Tbilisi, a Iranian force headed for Mtskheta to capture Luarsab. Luarsab's men moved into the forests, culling Iranians in guerrilla ambushes; many nobles retreated to Birtvisi's rock fortress. Tahmasp promised rewards for surrender; half of them accepted, but those who refused Islam were slaughtered and their wives and children sent as slaves to Iran. Luarsab's partisans, however, stopped Tahmasp: the Iranians took their loot and captives back to Karabagh, and Tbilisi came under *kizilbash* rule.

Levan of Kakhetia, the most realistic of Georgian rulers, embraced Iranian suzerainty and stopped helping Luarsab: Kakhetia thus became for fifty years an island of peace in a sea of devastation. (Levan could afford generous gestures, giving 80 Kakhetian Jewish households as a present to the Georgian Church in Jerusalem.[3]) Bagrat III, like Levan, renounced his son-in-law Luarsab: he wanted Shah Tahmasp's help against Samtskhe's pro-Ottoman rebels like Shalikashvili. In 1541 Bagrat and his counsellors visited Shah Tahmasp, who offered favours but refused troops. In 1543 Bagrat faced 22,000 Turks under Musa Paşa of Erzurum, whom the sultan expected to conquer Samtskhe and disable Imeretia. At first, Bagrat succeeded in co-opting Guria and Mingrelia, but Levan Dadiani, resentful that Guria, not Mingrelia, had carved up Qvarqvare's Samtskhe eight years previously, backed out. The Turks aimed modern cannon at Oltisi castle in Samtskhe. Bagrat had no artillery, and lost heart. He sent Musa Paşa gifts, offering him the keys to Oltisi if he removed the cannon. Musa Paşa returned to Erzurum, inexplicably leaving his artillery and a tiny garrison at Oltisi. Bagrat, Rostom of Guria and some Kartlian generals then attacked this garrison, acquiring their first cannon. Bagrat pursued the main Ottoman

force, overtaking and killing Musa Paşa one morning at Karaghak, halfway to Erzurum: 'the battlefield turned ruby-red', remarked the Ottoman historian Hasan Rumlu.[4]

Revenge came two years later: in 1545 Sultan Süleyman's main army attacked Samtskhe. This time, Bagrat was deserted by Levan Dadiani, but enthusiastically backed by King Luarsab. At Sokhoista (now Paşinler, near Erzurum) battle raged all day. Süleyman won when Samtskhe's forces withdrew after Luarsab and Bagrat prevented them exercising their traditional right to lead the attack. The Ottomans, helped by Otar Shalikashvili, overran Samtskhe, and Kaikhosro II became a puppet atabag. Levan Dadiani of Mingrelia likewise declared himself pro-Ottoman, and kept Guria on side by reassigning Ajaria to Prince Rostom. Then Levan Dadiani announced Mingrelia's independence, although the Dadianis by tradition served the king of Imeretia as *mandaturukhutsesi* (interior minister), just as the prince of Guria served as Imeretian *amirspasalari* (commander-in-chief). These desertions deprived the Imeretian king of four of his eight ministers. Bagrat had to leave Samtskhe, the Atsquri Icon of the Virgin his only trophy. Luarsab's only gain was a letter from Pope Paul III, praising him, Levan of Kakhetia, Bagrat of Imeretia, and the deceased Qvarqvare III of Samtskhe for their staunch love of the Roman Catholic Church, and promising that Stephen, archbishop of Nakhichevan, would send papal envoys.

Ottoman ferocity in Samtskhe alarmed even the new atabag Kaikhosro II: he appealed to Shah Tahmasp to relieve the oppression and also help him retrieve Javakheti from King Luarsab. In January 1547, despite a severe winter, Tahmasp occupied Akhalkalaki. The frozen Kura was a highway for the Iranian army into Kartli. While women and children stumbled to safety through the snow, the shah's army sped down the ice, conquering Javakheti and Lower Kartli. Luarsab's guerrillas, however, decimated the Iranians. Both King Bagrat III of Imeretia and Levan of Kakhetia smelled blood and helped Luarsab intercept the Iranians' retreat. Tahmasp had to pay them off to secure his escape. But Ottoman–Iranian war flared up again in 1547, and Shah Tahmasp summoned the kings of both Imeretia and Kakhetia to exact tribute and military support from them.

Kings Bagrat and Luarsab remained estranged: Bagrat wanted Iranian support against the Ottomans; Luarsab was determined to fight all-comers in Kartli. But Bagrat could not subdue Guria and Mingrelia. In 1548 he invited Levan Dadiani to a *darbazi* at Khoni in Mingrelia, imprisoned him, and proposed that Imeretia and Guria should divide up Mingrelia. Rostom of Guria was too wary to fall for such a trick: he advised Bagrat to release Dadiani. Bagrat's deviousness alarmed his nobles, as well as atabag Kaikhosro, who in 1550 bribed Prince Khopilandre Chkheidze to spring Dadiani from incarceration in Gelati's bell-tower and bring him to

Akhalkalaki. The three princes plotted Bagrat's fall, while Rostom of Guria reinstalled Dadiani in Mingrelia.

Events, however, overtook the plotters. Kaikhosro and most Samtskhe nobles now sided with Iran. Ottoman forces reacted violently. Helped by their French adviser Baron d'Aramon, the Turks destroyed the fortifications of Vani with cannon fire in August 1548: the French wanted a rapid Ottoman victory over Georgia and Persia, to free the Turks for war against their common enemy Austria.[5] But even after Ahmed Paşa took 25 castles in one week of August 1549 (levelling ten and garrisoning fifteen, sending many young men and women into slavery), Samtskhe was not pacified. The Ottomans then tried to take Ajaria away from Guria. Rostom forgot old scores and asked Bagrat for help, but received just 500 horseman under Bagrat's brother Vakhtang, whom Bagrat had secretly instructed to drive a wedge between Guria and Mingrelia and let Guria face the Turks alone. The Gurians drove back Ottoman forces across the Çoruh, but they had no boats to pursue them, and the Ottomans dug in at the old Byzantine fort of Gonio. Dadiani was fighting off the Turks, who had landed at Poti. Bagrat's brother Vakhtang tried to sow more discord, warning Dadiani that Guria was plotting against him. Dadiani then stopped fighting; the Turks first took all Georgia's Black Sea Coast, and, by 1550, all Tao-Klarjeti, i.e. western Samtskhe, except for the city of Artanuji. Iskender Paşa of Erzurum proclaimed himself 'Paşa of Georgia and Shirvan'.

Another Iranian invasion came when Shah Tahmasp decided to force Iskender Paşa out: at first, the shah was helped by eastern Georgia's kings. Levan of Kakhetia helped capture Shaki from the Ottomans, although thirty years earlier the Persians had expelled Levan from the city. Luarsab secured eastern Samtskhe, Javakheti and Artaani, a corridor for any Ottoman invasion of Kartli. But Luarsab found himself alone; neither Bagrat nor Kaikhosro would risk incurring the wrath of either superpower. Kaikhosro even asked the shah to stop Luarsab's aggression; consequently, Kartlian-held Samtskhe was invaded by Iranians in 1551, Vardzia was attacked and its monks slaughtered, while the shah looked on, stealing the manuscript library and monastery gates for his own treasury. After terrible bloodshed, Kaikhosro recuperated his lost territory, plus the southern province of Lore.

Luarsab evaded capture, and the Iranians withdrew to overwinter in Karabagh. Three years later, Shah Tahmasp entered Kartli from the south and made straight for inner Kartli, taking Gori. His goal was Ateni castle, where Luarsab's queen Tamar was sheltering with other Kartlian nobles. Archers kept the Iranians at bay, but a servant of the queen was captured and tortured into revealing the source of the castle's drinking water. The castle fell; the refugees were deported. Luarsab pursued the

shah's rearguard, but could not free the prisoners: Queen Tamar committed suicide. Some 30,000 Kartlians were marched back to Karabagh, many to become slaves (some soldiers and officials) in Iran. The widowed Luarsab fled to Imeretia; his father-in-law Bagrat, whose daughter preferred death to life in Iran, not only refused to hand Luarsab to Tahmasp, but demanded the *kizilbash* cede Surami to Imeretia.[6]

Stalemate between the Iranians and Ottomans led to peace talks: on 29 May 1555 the Treaty of Amasya gave Turkey not just western Armenia, but also Imeretia, Guria, Mingrelia and western Samtskhe, while Iran received Kartli, Kakhetia and the Kura basin (being most of Samtskhe), as well as eastern Armenia and all Azerbaijan. (A Georgian diplomat was present at Amasya, but could not mitigate the partition of his country.[7]) A wide frontier zone stretching north and south from Kars was demilitarized by deporting the population to Iran and levelling every fortification. Kakhetia, a tribute-paying Iranian vassal, noticed no difference. Bagrat, Luarsab and Kaikhosro were much worse off, no longer able to play Iran and Turkey off against each other. The spheres of influence cut Georgia north to south; reunification of west and east was impossible, whether by marital alliance or armed force. Bagrat, the Dadiani and the prince of Guria now paid the Ottomans heavy dues; the Ottomans showed little respect – from now on they nicknamed Imeretia and its capital Kutaisi 'Başacık' meaning 'Bare-Headed'. Kartli and Kakhetia were just as heavily taxed, but accorded more respect by the Iranians.

Luarsab did not hang up his sword; he fought small battles, repossessing castle after castle in Inner and Lower Kartli. Only when he tried to starve out Tbilisi's Iranian garrison did he provoke a reaction: the garrison commander complained to the shah's subordinates in Ganja, and in 1556 Shaverd, sultan of Karabagh, led an army north, meeting the Kartlians at Garisi in the Khrami valley. On the eve of the battle Luarsab dreamt that he would perish, but that his army would win and slay his killers. In the morning he informed Catholicos Zebede and the royal princes; Luarsab affirmed that his son Simon should inherit the throne, and made his other sons, Davit and Vakhtang, assent. Simon led the army and routed Shaverd's forces, while Luarsab and the Catholicos watched from a hill. The enemy ambushed the elderly spectators. Luarsab's horse stumbled in a crevice. The king fell and was struck with several arrows. The Iranian attackers were killed; Luarsab died, and was buried at Mtskheta. He was hailed by his contemporaries for his glorious intransigence.

Simon, just nineteen when he led a victorious army and inherited the throne, strove to emulate his father. He moved the capital from Tbilisi to Gori, which was free of Iranians. Kartli now had four years to recover from the depopulation of decades of warfare. In 1559 Simon married Nestan-Darejan, daughter of Levan of Kakhetia; the two kingdoms agreed

a pact, one aim being to free Tbilisi from Iranian occupation. The *kizilbash* garrison was lured out of the citadel, but once out they seized Simon's loyal cousin Archil, son of Bagrat Mukhranbatoni, sending him and his family to the shah at Qazvin. Levan of Kakhetia hung back, but let his son and heir Giorgi take a small army to besiege Dzegvi castle outside Tbilisi. This Kartlian-Kakhetian force then dug trenches, provoking the *kizilbash* in Tbilisi to bring reinforcements from Ganja. At night, through Tbilisi's now derelict eastern suburbs, the Ganja army passed unnoticed. On 6 April 1561, Easter Sunday, when even the Georgian sentries were in church, the Iranians filled in Giorgi's trenches and attacked. In this battle of Tsikhedidi ('Great Fortress') Crown Prince Giorgi was killed; the dismayed Kakhetians went home, and Tbilisi was retaken. Simon withdrew to Gori, still fighting; Kakhetia remained at peace.

After four relatively quiet years some Kartli nobles resented a resumption of war. Dissidents, particularly the Baratashvilis whose lands suffered first from Iranian invasions, congregated around Simon's brother Davit. He took them to see the shah at Qazvin. The shah received Davit extravagantly, persuaded him to accept Islam and take the name of Daud-Khan; Daud-Khan then received a royal warrant recognizing him as king of Tbilisi as well as the south and east (if not all) Kartli. Daud-Khan took back a small army to occupy his 'khanate'. In 1567 he fought forces led by his brother, King Simon, at Dighomi: Simon, together with Vakhtang, son of Bagrat Mukhranbatoni, still ruled most of Kartli. (In 1539 Bagrat Mukhranbatoni had taken holy orders as Barnabas; he spent his remaining years composing *A Story of the Godless Beliefs of the Ismailites*.) Despite losing the battle, Daud-Khan, helped by neighbouring Muslim rulers, retained Tbilisi. In 1569 Shah Tahmasp decided to dispossess Simon, assembled an army in Karabagh, hired the Shamkhal's Kumyk and Avar soldiers from Dagestan and invaded Georgia. His army was guided through the Algeti valley by a notorious turncoat, Kakhaber Qorghanashvili; at the battle of Partskhisi the outnumbered Georgians managed to force the *kizilbash* back. Simon himself speared several Iranian soldiers, but became cut off from the main army. Qorghanashvili pointed out Simon to Shamkhal Jemshid, who unhorsed the king with a javelin. Simon was put in chains and, when he refused Islam, was taken to Alamut fortress (between Tehran and the Caspian): here, with other distinguished captives, he languished until 1578.

Daud-Khan, boycotted by his people, was King Davit XI of Kartli merely in name. The traitor Qorghanashvili was caught by Prince Sachino Baratashvili on the road to Kojori, and, a folk poem says, 'his arms bound, he flew off a cliff'. But Kartli, although at peace in the 1570s, was traumatized economically and culturally. Georgian centres abroad, enduring Ottoman oppression, had for decades heard little from the homeland –

even pilgrims rarely visited; Palestinian monasteries sold their silver chalices for food.

Kakhetia, cunningly managed by King Levan, escaped the worst of Tahmasp's attention. But the Iranians began slicing off areas of Kakhetia inhabited by ethnic minorities and Muslims: the Tsakhur of southwest Dagestan were declared to be subjects of the shah;[8] and other areas in the Caucasian foothills were given to Dagestani lords. King Levan's friendly alliance with his father-in-law, Shamkhal Qaramusal (who ruled a confederation of Kumyks and Avars), was soured. Levan also had to send his second son Iese (also known as Vakhtang) as a hostage at Qazvin. In 1559 Iese, as Isa-Khan, converted to Islam, but soon reneged and tried to flee. He was caught on 23 December 1552 and put in Alamut prison, where he was later joined by King Simon of Kartli.

Levan decided on a change of policy; like his grandfather Aleksandre I of Kakhetia, he sent feelers to the tsar of Russia. In the 1490s there had been no response, but by 1556 Ivan IV had conquered Astrakhan, gaining access, albeit disputed, across the Caspian Sea and up the Terek river, to Kakhetia's borders. Of the Caucasian peoples, the Circassians had led the way with a Russian alliance,[9] and had recommended the Georgians as Christians needing protection. Russia, the world's sole powerful Orthodox state, was simultaneously breaking through to the Baltic, Black and Caspian seas. Here, at last, was Kakhetia's alternative to Ottoman or Iranian domination. In 1563 Levan sent a monk, Iakob, to Moscow to ask for troops to man the Terek; by 1567 Ivan IV had built Terek-Town fort where the Sunja and Terek rivers meet. This *démarche* was short-lived: the Ottomans insisted the Russians demolish their fort, and a Crimean Tatar army galloped north and burned half of Moscow down. Ivan IV, overstretched by his Livonian wars, complied, and Kakhetia was left in the lurch: Shah Tahmasp, despite friendly trade relations with Russia, never forgave the Kakhetians for bringing Russian Cossacks into the Caucasus.

When Levan died in 1574, having given Kakhetia its longest period of stability in 350 years, Iran at last could intervene. Levan had twelve sons by two wives: of his sons by his first wife Tinatin (divorced when Levan was still in his twenties, she lived 60 years as a nun until 1591), the eldest, Giorgi, died fighting for King Simon of Kartli, the second, Iese, was imprisoned in Alamut, while the fourth, Nikoloz, was a monk who became Catholicos in 1584. The third son, Aleksandre, however, met strong opposition from his stepbrothers, El-Mirza and Davit, by Levan's second queen, the Shamkhal's daughter. Only outside forces – 'King' Daud-Khan, Prince Bardzim Amilakhori of Kartli and Elizbar, duke of Ksani – and an oath of loyalty to Shah Tahmasp secured Aleksandre II's throne.

Once crowned, however, Aleksandre II pursued his father's policies and 'instead of armes continually used prayers and presents', as Giovanni

Tommaso Minadoi observed;[10] he kept the country populated and prosperous for 30 years, juggling the interests of the shah, the sultan, the Shamkhal and the tsar. Unlike his father, marriage brought Aleksandre no political advantage: he married an Amilakhori, perhaps in gratitude for her father's help in securing his throne.

After the treaty of Amasya in 1555, Imeretia and its feuding neighbouring principalities, cut off from the outside world, became the polar opposite of Kakhetia. Money and food, especially salt (from the Crimea), were short: the Black Sea ports imported little and exported mainly slaves. Guria and Mingrelia were crushed by Ottoman piracy, taxation and enslavement; Bagrat III of Imeretia paid the Ottomans such heavy taxes that his peasantry starved. Peasants were often exported as slaves in lieu of Ottoman dues. In one year, 2,000 to 3,000 young men and women were sent as slaves to Turkey from Mingrelia – equalling the birth rate. The depletion was worse than losing young men in war: without young women, following generations could not recuperate the losses.

Bagrat III could not help Imeretia's economic plight. But he tried to disempower his fractious nobles by reorganizing western Georgia's Church. In the late 1540s he moved the Catholicos to Gelati from the Abkhaz port of Bichvinta (Pitsunda), now an island of Christianity surrounded by pagan and Muslim Abkhaz and Circassians; he also made Gelati a royal mausoleum. Bagrat III dismantled large bishoprics, appointing new compliant bishops, his only reliable executives. In 1555 Bagrat summoned at Gelati an all-Georgia Synod: Imeretia's Catholicos Evdemoz, Kartli's and Kakhetia's Catholicos Zebede I and ten senior bishops of Imeretia and Mingrelia took part. The synod passed the *Law of the Catholicoi*: 'If any man, great or small, prince, freeman or peasant, sell another, he shall be excommunicated from the communion of saints, be cast out and sentenced to the gallows.' Slave-trading incurred the same penalty as treason, but Bagrat's enforcement was too weak to stop the trade.

Giorgi II became king on Bagrat's death in 1565. Guria, Mingrelia and Imeretia's nobility went on feuding. Giorgi allied himself with Guria to curb Giorgi III Dadiani's ambitions; in turn, Dadiani suborned Imeretia's rebellious lords, declaring war on Giorgi II in 1568. Giorgi narrowly escaped murder by a nobleman, Bezhan Nemsadze, who wanted to enthrone his own nephew Khosro. (The conspirators only seized Giorgi's nephew Konstantine.) Giorgi II's vengeance took time. He joined Giorgi, prince of Guria or Gurieli, since 1564, attacked Mingrelia, occupying Zugdidi, and sent the Dadiani fleeing to Istanbul for help. The sultan, interested in dividing western Georgia, gave Dadiani nine ships and soldiers from Trabzon and Erzurum. This force intimidated Guria: Dadiani conceded Guria peace after receiving 10,000 drachmas compensation for the dis-

honour inflicted by Giorgi Gurieli on Giorgi III Dadiani by divorcing the latter's sister. (Dadiani had previously paid Gurieli the same sum when, after they first quarrelled, he divorced Gurieli's sister.)

King Giorgi II, before fighting both Guria and Mingrelia, first crushed his own pro-Dadiani rebels: he invited Javakh Chiladze, the chief rebel, to a banquet, where Chiladze was killed, and his lands confiscated. Guria and Mingrelia then attacked Imeretia, occupied the confiscated Chiladze lands, a virtual principality straddling Imeretia, Guria and Mingrelia, and shared them out. War petered out in 1572, after Levan Dadiani broke his neck in a hunting accident, and his son Giorgi was disarmed by his sister's marriage to Giorgi II's heir Bagrat.

This new alliance became a pact against Guria, which took similar steps to disarm its enemies: Giorgi of Gurieli married off his sister to Mamia, Giorgi Dadiani's younger brother. But peace came only after a battle at Zugdidi, when Giorgi Dadiani fled to Abkhazia, and his brother Mamia took over Mingrelia. King Giorgi II demanded that Mamia return the Chiladze lands before Imeretia recognized him as Mamia IV Dadiani of Mingrelia. Giorgi Dadiani, with north Caucasian troops, made a brief comeback, before fleeing again to Abkhazia. Finally, Giorgi Dadiani persuaded his neighbours to help him oust his younger brother: he gave Guria the port of Hopa, and married Imeretia's Queen Rusudan's sister (who, although a Circassian, had grown up in Kutaisi palace). Dispossessed, Mamia Dadiani yielded. Giorgi Gurieli married King Giorgi's widowed daughter-in-law. The marital alliance of the three Giorgis of Imeretia, Guria and Mingrelia gave western Georgia respite for the late 1570s. The peace was breached only when Batulia, another Dadiani, rebelled: Giorgi II and the Gurieli were asked by Giorgi Dadiani to capture and kill the rebel. The Gurians caught Batulia and confiscated his landholdings, but Giorgi Gurieli refused to kill him. King Giorgi and Giorgi Dadiani sent agents to the prison and had Batulia strangled.

Samtskhe, its west an Ottoman *paşalık*, its east Kaikhosro II's atabagy under Iranian suzerainty, was in its death throes. The Turks periodically raided the atabag's territory, driving Kaikhosro in 1570 to Qazvin where he begged Shah Tahmasp to intervene, and where he died in 1573. The new atabag, Qvarqvare IV, was a puppet of his imperious mother, Dedisimedi, who had her main rival, the nobleman Varaz Shalikashvili, murdered. An uprising and an attempt on Qvarqvare IV followed. All through 1576–7 civil war raged through eastern Samtskhe, destroying towns such as Tmogvi. Qvarqvare appealed to the shah, but Tahmasp died in 1576. His half-blind, introverted successor Mohammed Khudabanda was indifferent to Georgian interests, unlike Tahmasp, five of whose ten wives were Georgian.

Khudabanda's reputed weakness encouraged the Ottomans to make war on Iran. In 1578 Lala Mustafa Paşa crossed Samtskhe and Kartli on

his way to Shirvan, where he planned to meet a force of Crimean Tatars and attack Iran. Lala Paşa called on all Georgia's kings and princes to join him. Qvarqvare IV of Samtskhe hesitated, and was challenged by his brother Manuchar, whom the Ottomans promised to make governor of all Samtskhe if he cooperated. Many Samtskhe nobles also sided with the Turks; Qvarqvare IV was supported by freemen and their peasantry. On 7 August 1578 Lala Paşa's army started moving down the left bank of the Kura; some Ottomans besieged the castle of Mgeltsikhe; the rest took two other castles, killing the garrison of Kajta Tsikhe. Two days later, from noon to nightfall, the Ottomans fought an Iranian-Georgian force by Lake Çıldır. From a mountaintop, Manuchar of Samtskhe and his 6,000 men watched the Ottomans winning; Manuchar then descended and gave the Turks the keys to the nearby castles, looking on as several thousand *kizilbash* prisoners were beheaded and Georgian prisoners were branded with burning logs from a bonfire. To Manuchar's outrage, Samtskhe was divided into eight Ottoman *sanjaks*: he himself was put in charge of just one, Khakhuli. Akhalkalaki was occupied; Qvarqvare IV and his mother Dedisimedi surrendered.

A fortnight later, Lala Paşa was at Tbilisi's gates. The Iranian puppet king, Daud-Khan, meant to resist, but the population fled to the forests, where Ottoman soldiers hunted them down, and Daud-Khan fled, too. Kartli was now ruled by Vakhtang, the son of Bagrat Mukhranbatoni, but, with other aristocrats – Bardzim Amilakhori, Elizbar, duke of Ksani – Vakhtang Mukhranbatoni surrendered to Lala Mustafa Paşa. Tbilisi became a *paşalık*; Gori, a *sanjak*; and Kartli's major castles had Ottoman garrisons. The Ottomans headed for Imeretia, but their men were slaughtered by King Giorgi's army in the Likhi passes.

Lala Paşa then turned east, towards Shirvan. When the Ottoman army reached the Kartli–Kakhetia border at Sartichala on the river Iori, King Aleksandre II of Kakhetia met them in his new role as an Ottoman vassal. As a reward, Aleksandre's son Erekle was made Ottoman governor of Shaki in Azerbaijan, and the king himself was granted the title of Beglarbeg. The fee was an annual tribute of 30 bales of silk, twenty young men and women, ten falcons and ten goshawks.

Kartli's and Kakhetia's sudden switch of allegiance roused Shah Khudabanda to action. He sought a king in Kartli with popular support, so brought Simon from Alamut prison and offered him the crown of Kartli if he accepted Islam. (To punish Aleksandre of Kakhetia for treachery, Khudabanda kept the Kakhetian heir Iese in Alamut until the latter died in 1580.) Nine years' incarceration weakened Simon's resolve. In 1578 he accepted Khudabanda's terms, and received cannon and 5,000 kizilbash under General Ali Quli Khan to invade Tbilisi via Dmanisi.[11] With him went other Georgian hostages, including Archil, Vakhtang Mukhranbatoni's

younger brother. As Simon and the *kizilbash* approached, 'King' Daud-Khan, dismayed by the shah's ingratitude, also switched sides: he handed all Lore province to the Turks and sought asylum in Istanbul, although his sons Bagrat and Khosro, by his Avar queen, were in Iran. In Istanbul, Daud-Khan frequented philosophers and libraries, spending his last six years on *Daud's Compilation*, a translation of Turkish medical handbooks, which Daud-Khan felt were sorely needed in Georgia, where he had 'seen people die without help, out of ignorance'.

While his brother studied in Istanbul, King Simon desperately resisted the overwhelming Ottomans. Routed on Imeretia's borders, Lala Paşa had withdrawn to Erzurum. Sultan Murad III then sent 60 ships under Admiral Kiliç Ali Paşa to Poti. Here the Turks built a castle. Then their galleys rowed up the Rioni towards Kutaisi, but were ambushed by King Giorgi III's musketeers. Meanwhile Levan, Giorgi III Dadiani's son, demolished the Ottoman fort at Poti and stole 25 cannon.

Other Ottoman forces from the east approached Tbilisi, where the garrison was reduced to raiding the countryside for food. King Simon used guerrilla tactics to disable the Ottomans, who then, together with Lala Mustafa Paşa, regrouped in Samtskhe. Atabag Qvarqvare IV and his mother sided with the Ottomans, while his younger brother Manuchar demanded autonomy. Lala Paşa took the quarrelling family to Erzurum, where Manuchar offered to help the Turks conquer Azerbaijan if Samtskhe was semi-independent. Instead, the Turks confirmed Qvarqvare IV as atabag, and sent Manuchar to Istanbul. There Manuchar accepted Islam, and, as Mustafa Paşa, in 1581 he ousted his elder brother Qvarqvare and, ruled eastern Samtskhe as Paşa of Çıldır. Samtskhe was now no longer part of Georgia.

Simon's relentless attacks dissuaded the sultan from using Kartli as a bridgehead for conquering Tabriz: he decided to cut all routes to Georgia from the south and the west and destroy all Kartli's southern forts. Consequently, the Ottoman garrison was doomed: food was so scarce that a bushel of wheat cost 1,000 silver akçe and a dog, for eating, 2,000 akçe. After four months' siege only 700 men survived. Too late, Lala Paşa and the Paşa of Damascus sent 20,000 men with supplies: this force was ambushed in the Dmanisi gorge by King Simon and the shah's general Ali Quli Khan. Guerrillas in the forested slopes drove the Turks into the Khrami river. The Paşa of Damascus, however, halted his men at the exit from the gorge, where Simon, thinking them demoralized, attacked. A concealed Turkish force routed the Georgians and *kizilbash*. Ali Quli Khan was captured, and the Turks entered Tbilisi.

The Ottomans made their prisoner Ali Quli Khan show them a safer route home. King Simon tried another ambush, harassed their rearguard and took booty, horses and prisoners. But the Turks still got to Kars.

Sultan Murad then replaced Lala Paşa with the formidable Sinan Paşa. Sinan Paşa solicited help from King Giorgi of Imeretia, promising to appoint his son Beg (governor) of Tbilisi if they defeated King Simon. Sinan Paşa broke through to Tbilisi in 1580, with token Imeretian help and despite Kartlian guerrillas. He then appointed a Muslim convert as Beg of Tbilisi. (This Giorgi Beg, also known as Yusuf Paşa, may have been Mamia, a renegade son of King Giorgi of Imeretia.) Nevertheless, Sinan Paşa only appointed a Beg and supplied a garrison. He fought his way home to Erzurum through Kartli and Samtskhe. The Ottoman–Iranian war had reached stalemate: peace talks began in 1582.

Shah Khudabanda made Aleksandre II of Kakhetia switch loyalty again, by taking hostage in Qazvin his fourth son, eleven-year-old Konstantine, and by fining him a fortune in gold for each year he had been an Ottoman vassal. Unfortunately, Simon, on returning to Kartli, immediately quarrelled with Aleksandre II of Kakhetia, his brother-in-law. Aleksandre could not get at Simon, but his army looted Kartli and sexually assaulted Nestan-Darejan, Aleksandre's sister and Simon's queen. Simon then drove back the Kakhetians. The shah thus could not weld Kakhetia and Kartli with Shirvan and the Shamkhal of the Kumyks and Avars into an anti-Turkish coalition, but he did make Simon and Aleksandre swear on the Gospel and the cross to collaborate with each other and with Iran. (Reconciliation came a year later, when Aleksandre's son Davit married a daughter of Ashotan Mukhranbatoni, and Kartli and Kakhetia were doubly tied by marriage.) Simon demurred at other bonds: when the shah asked for Simon's daughter as crown prince Hamza Mirza's wife, the king replied that Georgian tradition forbade marrying a Christian princess to a Muslim.

Simon was, however, eager to fight. He and Ali Quli Khan, freed from captivity in Erzurum, fired their newly acquired cannon at the Tbilisi garrison. An Ottoman relief army left Diyarbekir, bringing with them not just Manuchar-Mustafa atabag-Paşa of Samtskhe, but forces from Imeretia, Guria and Mingrelia. They assembled at Mukhrani to attack Kartli. But this unholy alliance lost the battle of Mukhrani, and few Ottoman soldiers reached Tbilisi. The Paşa of Tbilisi sought safety in Samtskhe.

Sensing catastrophe, horrified by the havoc wrought on Samtskhe, Mustafa-Manuchar made secret overtures to King Simon. The Paşas, in any case, blamed Mustafa-Manuchar for the Mukhrani fiasco, and a military council discussed executing him. Forewarned, Manuchar placed 50 of his followers outside the Paşa's tent: they were to come to his rescue if they heard him yell. Once inside, Manuchar asked for his orders and then made for the exit. Someone seized his sleeve, but Manuchar grabbed his captor's sword and, yelling loudly, clove the man head to belly. The Samtskheans burst in and in the mêlée a Paşa was badly wounded. The

Ottomans retreated to Kars. Manuchar renounced Islam and became King Simon's ally.

The Turks at first appointed a Georgian Muslim convert to rule Samtskhe, but the sultan sent apologies to Manuchar for accusing him of treachery. From 1582 to 1585 Manuchar was again atabag, consolidated by marrying Simon's daughter, Elene.

Meanwhile Simon cleared Turks from Lore and Samshvilde, areas south of Tbilisi, and briefly liberated Tbilisi. But in 1584 another Ottoman general, Rezvan Paşa, invaded, after lulling Georgian fears by feigning to move against Nakhichevan. Rezvan garrisoned Lore with artillery, then destroyed Dmanisi before moving on Tbilisi. Simon's and Manuchar's army faced the Turks across the river Khrami. Legend has it that Simon, disguised as an envoy, crossed the lines to negotiate with Rezvan Paşa, studying the Ottoman dispositions before returning. The Georgians then circled and attacked the Turks' rearguard at dawn; outnumbered five to one, they failed. Rezvan Paşa devastated Samtskhe, and only mutiny among the frozen and starving Ottoman soldiery halted the campaign. The next year Simon retook Lore; again the sultan sent an army to reverse Simon's gains.

In summer 1587 the sultan planned a 'final blow' against Simon and Manuchar: one army took Akhaltsikhe, the other headed for Tbilisi and Gori, forcing Simon into Samtskhe. Manuchar's enemies, notably the Shalikashvilis, decided on an accommodation with the Ottomans, and Ahmed Paşa of Çıldır finally took over an Ottoman Samtskhe. With no active ally, despairing of any successful Iranian move, Simon, too, sued for peace. In exchange for annual tribute, Simon was recognized as a Christian king with full autonomy.

In 1590 the Iranians signed a peace treaty conceding virtually all Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the Ottomans. Nobody – Georgians, Ottomans or Europeans (horrified at the free hand Iran had given Turkey) – foresaw that Abbas, the exceptionally perspicacious and active shah since 1587, was using the peace treaty to modernize his country and army for eventual victory.

With the Ottomans in the ascendant, western Georgia disintegrated. Guria and Mingrelia were at each other's throats: Mamia Dadiani became, on his brother's death in 1582, undisputed ruler of Mingrelia, and drove Giorgi Gurieli out to Istanbul, installing for four years his client, Vakhtang Gurieli. When Vakhtang died, Giorgi returned to Gonio fort, and with Ottoman support began a fratricidal war that ravaged all western Georgia. In 1583 King Giorgi II of Imeretia imprisoned his brother Konstantine and nephew Rostom, who both threatened to disinherit Giorgi's twelve-year-old heir Levan. Uncle and nephew were tamed after four years, thanks to Mamia Dadiani's intervention: Mamia thus became

a kingmaker when Giorgi II died in 1586 and the twelve-year-old Levan took the throne. To cement the alliance and have his uncle repressed, Levan was compelled in 1587 to marry Mamia Dadiani's daughter Marekhi.

Anarchy ensued. Guria and Mingrelia enlisted Imeretia's nobles in their quarrel. Only the 1590 treaty inhibited the Ottomans from invading the entire region. King Simon of Kartli took soundings and decided to exploit the chaos: in 1588 he took over areas of northern Imeretia, whose nobles supported Kartli, and then invaded the centre. The seventeen-year-old Levan appealed in vain for Gurian and Mingrelian help, lost the ensuing battle of Gopanto, and fled north to the mountains of Racha. Simon then took Imeretian hostages back to Kartli, where the Ottomans appeared to be threatening Gori. Simon was now sure enough of unifying Georgia to send a mission to Italy with letters for Pope Sixtus V[12] and for Philip II of Spain: he reminded Philip that the two Iberias were consanguine, and asked for a diversionary war against the Turks. Sixtus V and Philip II both stipulated that the three Georgian kings must first unite and then ally with Iran. Simon also contacted Emperor Rudolf II, unaware that Rudolf was about to sign a treaty with the Turks.

King Levan of Imeretia, however, left Racha to retrieve his throne, which he held for just two years. In 1590 Mamia Dadiani attacked Kutaisi and imprisoned the king in Shkhepi castle, where he died. Mamia then installed Levan's cousin Rostom on the throne. Giorgi Gurieli had another candidate, Bagrat, son of Prince Teimuraz, and tried, with Ottoman troops, to enthrone Bagrat that same year.

Imeretia's anarchy worsened when King Simon invaded again, took Kutaisi, deported to Tbilisi the newly crowned Bagrat, and hounded out King Rostom. Rostom sought refuge in Mingrelia with Manuchar Dadiani, who had succeeded his brothers after Mamia died in 1590. A Mingrelian army then invaded Imeretia to restore Rostom as king. Many Imeretian nobles, the Abashidzes, Tseretelis and Chkheidzes, preferred Simon to the barbaric Dadiani; Simon came back with cannon – the first use of artillery in a Georgian civil war – took Skanda and Kutaisi castles, and this time left garrisons. Again, Rostom fled to Mingrelia, pursued by Simon. Rostom was the last of the Imeretian royal line: capturing or killing him was the easiest way to reunite Imeretia and Kartli. Dadiani sent Simon an offer of 'peace and submission' to a unified Georgia 'as in the times of Davit the Builder', but Simon insisted on Rostom being surrendered. The joint Kartlian-Imeretian army abhorred such ruthless means of achieving unity: they told Dadiani that if attacked they would simply flee, and, when attacked at first light, most of Simon's army melted away. The Kartlians had to withdraw and recognize King Rostom, despite his being Manuchar Dadiani's puppet. Simon's dreams of reunification were shattered; an ever more aggressive Mingrelia began to call the shots.

Disintegration continued: Abkhazia under the Chachba-Shervashidze family broke away from Mingrelia and submitted to the Ottomans. Here, however, a more tribal society, in which feudal subservience was lighter, made life tolerable; the export of boxwood and slaves to Istanbul enriched the Shervashidzes: a young man fetched 15 écus, a pretty girl 20.

Samtskhe, even though Manuchar titled himself *khelmtsipe* (king), was now an Ottoman province. The Ottoman bureaucracy brought in its *büyük defter*, its 'great register', or Doomsday book, listing every taxable landholding or person, and *küçük defter*, 'little register', which apportioned tax revenues to the occupying authority. With exceptions for deserving Christians, landholders had to be Muslims and furnish one soldier per household; taxation was heavy – about 20 silver akçe per household annually, and a quarter heavier on non-Muslims. Peasants fled Samtskhe, even for war-torn Imeretia or Kartli, so that of 1,160 villages, 364 were deserted and in one area, 41 out of 48. The Ottomans tried to settle non-Georgians, even turning a blind eye to Christian landholders, but what was Georgia's economic and cultural heartland had become Anatolia's bleakest backwater. Churches were either turned into mosques or demolished for building stone.[13]

Only Kakhetia, under Aleksandre II, flourished. Palaces and churches were built. Agriculture prospered, as did trade with countries around the Caspian. Aleksandre even complained that a century of peace had made Kakhetia so overpopulated that there were too little game or untilled land for hunting. In fact, Aleksandre was staking his security on Russia's imperial expansion. Negotiations were difficult: it took from April to October for an ambassador to make the journey to or from Moscow, during which he might be robbed, kidnapped or murdered. Interpreting was difficult. Until 1596, Aleksandre had one interpreter, a Circassian who knew Georgian and Russian. (Aleksandre had a Circassian daughter-in-law and, possibly, an aunt.) Clerics usually undertook such missions (the Russians needed assurances that the Georgian Church was still Orthodox) and spoke Greek; but the Kakhetian clergy had stopped attending Greek classes at seminary, and the only fluent clerics were those returned from monasteries abroad. Thus negotiations were conducted in Turkish, a language that all Kakhetian and some Russian diplomats understood, but double translation led to misunderstandings and friction.

The Russians were interested first in new routes for the silk that they imported from Iran, second in securing an anti-Turkish ring stretching from the Caucasus to Iran, and third in Kakhetia's military potential – which they assessed at 10,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry, organized in four 'banners', the Crown prince Giorgi leading the vanguard, and Davit the left flank. The Tsars had for years proclaimed themselves sovereigns of Iberia. Aleksandre had some inkling about world affairs (although he

believed that Philip II of Spain had conquered England) from his agents masquerading as merchants, like the Armenian Sovdagar, who visited Moscow, Rome, Qazvin and Istanbul; the king was famous enough for the pope to ask for ambassadors. Aleksandre banked on the Russians settling as his neighbours on the river Terek and having a common interest in taming the powerful Shamkhal's Kumyks and Avars. He also wanted modern artillery (which the Iranians denied him) and Russian icon painters and falconers.

In 1585 Musketeer Danilov reached Kakhetia with a seal from Tsar Fiodor,[14] and Aleksandre sent ambassadors – two clerics and a Circassian – to Moscow. In 1587 a return embassy of Birkin, Pivov and Polukhanov arrived with the Georgian emissaries, bringing an oath of loyalty to the tsar for Aleksandre to sign: he did so on 29 August 1587, promising to be an enemy of Russia's enemies and a friend of their friends, and to pay annual tribute in silk cloth. Aleksandre expected in return a permanent Russian fort at Terek-Town, and armed expeditions against the Shamkhal. The Russians, in principle, kept their promises but, new to mountain warfare, could not fight the Shamkhal, or even reach his capital, Tarku. Worse, the Crimean Khanate reacted by declaring war on Russia in 1591, and the Shamkhal staged a serious invasion of Kakhetia in 1589.

Envoys on both sides felt maltreated. Kakhetians in Moscow felt under house arrest; Russians in Kakhetia complained of being left to fend for themselves in the forests and of being assaulted and robbed. Presents, such as live falcons, died on the journey. Pleas, such as for expertise in casting cannon, were fobbed off. Some Russians were accused of rape and murder in Kakhetian villages. Russian clerics abhorred what they considered liturgical abuses in the Georgian Church. Worst of all, Shah Abbas, a murderous paranoiac when aroused, saw in Aleksandre's démarches, even though Russia was more Iran's ally than enemy, base treachery: after all, Aleksandre had sworn loyalty in turn to the Turks, the Iranians and the Russians. Abbas had sent Aleksandre fine horses and 20 camel-loads of silk cloth; he resented Aleksandre's betrothing his daughter Nestan-Darejan to Manuchar I Dadiani, rather than to the shah. Abbas, for the time being, merely took one more Kakhetian hostage, Teimuraz, son of Aleksandre's eldest son Davit. In the late 1590s, however, tensions between Iran and Kakhetia grew.

King Simon of Kartli was sceptical: he knew Russia was too remote to help if Kartli was attacked. He had no illusion that the pope might send an army if Kartli converted to Roman Catholicism. In 1598, after his Imeretian misadventures, Simon resumed his war to liberate Kartli from Ottoman occupation. He besieged Gori's garrison, which held out until 1599, when Simon's son Giorgi feigned to abandon the siege for Lent. The Ottomans relaxed, and the Georgians attacked at night: by dawn Gori was

free. Simon was by now intercepting an Ottoman army under Jaffar Paşa, sent from Tabriz to crush Manuchar, who had rebelled against Ottoman rule in Samtskhe. The Georgian army was unready and the commanders objected, but Simon insisted on attacking at Nakhiduri on the Algeti river. On the eve of battle he received Communion and made his farewells, then led the cavalry, javelin held high. The Ottomans took heavy casualties, but after five hours' battle, numbers told, and the king had to retreat. Pursued by Ottomans, the cavalry jostled one another in the narrow Partskhisi ravine: Simon and his horse tumbled into a quagmire. His men were struggling to pull king and horse out, when the Ottomans caught up and the king was identified by a prince, Baratashvili, who had sided with the Turks. Simon was fettered. His son Giorgi rushed from Gori to rescue him; Giorgi captured Jaffar Paşa's rearguard, but not the prisoners. In 1600 Jaffar sent Simon to Istanbul, together with a consignment of severed heads, one of them belonging to Vakhtang, Simon's youngest brother. A prisoner in Yedi Küle, Simon was treated respectfully; his granddaughter Gulchara (Giorgi's daughter) was brought to Constantinople to care for the aged king.

While Simon refused to concede any point, religious or political, the remarkable Gulchara became a favourite of Sultan Mehmet III's mother and metamorphosed into Mehmet's and then his young successor Ahmed I's ambassador to Shah Abbas. In Kartli, Simon's son Giorgi X took the throne, and emptied the treasury – and beggared many nobles – collecting a ransom for Simon. Giorgi also sent his own youngest son, the thirteen-year-old Davit, as a replacement hostage. Despite the boy impressing Europeans at the sultan's court as 'an extremely handsome young prince', and the promotion of an ethnic Georgian, Mehmet Paşa Gürcü, to *kapucıbaşı* ('prime minister'), the Ottomans held onto King Simon. On Gulchara's first mission to see Shah Abbas, she was allowed to include King Simon. But Ahmed's counsellors feared Simon might reveal too much to Abbas: they recalled him to Yedi Küle seven days' journey into the mission. Gulchara impressed the European ambassadors in Constantinople with her 'beauty, grandeur and eloquence'; they concluded that 'in Georgia all politics are in female hands'. After several journeys across Anatolia, and renewed attacks by Abbas, in 1612 she persuaded the sultan, despite the warmongering factions at court, to accept reinstatement of the 1555 Amasya Treaty excluding the Ottomans from Kartli and Kakhetia.[15] But Gulchara's effectively pro-Georgian diplomacy came too late for Simon, who, languishing in Yedi Küle even longer than in Alamut, died aged 74 in 1611. His body, but not the ransom, was returned to Kartli. Gulchara's fate is unknown.

The new century undid not only King Simon of Kartli, but also King Aleksandre of Kakhetia. In October 1601, in a high fever, he lay barely

breathing for three days. His eldest son Davit took the throne, his younger brother Giorgi consenting to be heir apparent. But they quarrelled at a banquet, Davit fearing his brother might murder him. (Politically quiescent, Davit was hitherto known for translating the Persian romance *Kalila and Dimna*.) Aleksandre then rose from his sickbed, but Davit would not relinquish power, and Aleksandre had to take holy orders. In his brief rule, Davit, with his monk-father, received Nashchokin and Leontiev, Tsar Boris Godunov's ambassadors, and swore new oaths of loyalty. Then Davit defenestrated twelve and beheaded five of his brother Giorgi's supporters, driving Giorgi to seek asylum in Mtskheta (the new king of Kartli, Giorgi X, repatriated the fugitive, whom Davit incarcerated in Torgha castle). When, however, Davit cut down with a sword an opponent who was sheltering in a church doorway, Aleksandre formally cursed him. On 21 October 1602 the curse took effect: Davit died, possibly of gas gangrene. Aleksandre left the monastery to rule again, and released his heir Giorgi. (Davit's widow Ketevan, afraid of Giorgi's revenge, had her son Teimuraz sent to Shah Abbas for safety.)

Shah Abbas was alarmed when the Russian ambassador to Iran now claimed Kakhetia as Russia's vassal and asked the shah to repatriate Aleksandre II's son Konstantine, who barely remembered Kakhetia. In summer 1603 fighting broke out again between Iran and Turkey. Shah Abbas had now made his wild *kizilbash* Türkmens mere auxiliaries, relying on a professional army of *ghulam* (foreigners, typically captured Transcaucasians equipped with firearms and trained by Europeans). The Iranians quickly reclaimed Tabriz and Nakhichevan, and laid siege to Erevan. This was the shah's pretext to summon Aleksandre of Kakhetia and Giorgi X of Kartli to war. Giorgi X consented (and received two villages in Gilian and 300 tumans as a reward); Aleksandre feared a trap, although his own son Konstantine brought him the summons. Konstantine persuaded his father to accept. Shah and king, when they met, concealed their mutual dislike with compliments and gifts. Aleksandre was given 700 tumans, but lost Saingilo, part of south-east Kakhetia, which the shah populated with Türkmens. By 1604 the Iranian offensive petered out: Ottoman forces in Erzurum and Kars were too strong. The shah sent Giorgi X and Nugzar, duke of Aragvi, back to Kartli to strengthen their defences, but kept Aleksandre where he could see him.

When a new Russian embassy arrived in Kakhetia in 1604, they met Aleksandre's heir, Giorgi. The envoys, Tatishchev and Ivanov, brought good news: the Russians under Buturlin would attack the Shamkhal, and Boris Godunov sought a Georgian groom for his daughter Ksenia and a bride for his son Fiodor – Teimuraz, the son of the late Davit, was ideal for Ksenia, as was Davit's daughter Elene for Fyodor. Giorgi expressed enthusiasm, 'We're under the sultan's and the shah's knives . . . Come and save

us.' Tatishchev gave, however, just 40 Russian soldiers to stiffen the Kakhetian army. As for the dynastic marriages, Giorgi could neither refuse nor agree: Abbas's envoy was already in Kakhetia arranging to take both children to Iran, where Elene would enter the shah's harem. Kakhetia's noblemen were split between pro-Russian and pro-Iranian factions. Many, although they could not foresee Boris Godunov's imminent death and Russia's subsequent impotence, feared that Russia was less reliable than Iran: Teimuraz and Elene left for Iran. On New Year's Day the Russian envoys made Giorgi swear an oath of loyalty to a doomed Tsar.

In 1605 Shah Abbas was fixated by the Ottoman danger: he decided to release Aleksandre II. But Aleksandre was sent to Kakhetia with his son Konstantine, who probably had instructions to kill his father if he showed any disloyalty to the shah. King and son were ordered, as soon as they arrived home, to lead an army against the Turks' ally Shirvan, which Konstantine would then govern. They reached Kakhetia in March 1605; Konstantine wanted to attack Shirvan immediately, but King Aleksandre played for time, doubtful of success and hoping that a Russian army might break through to Kakhetia. Early one morning, before a royal audience for the ambassadors, Konstantine and some *kizilbash* officers burst into the king's quarters, summoning him and Giorgi to a council of war. Konstantine berated his father and brother for dithering, drew his sword and beheaded Giorgi. The king intervened, but was hacked down, together with the bishop of Rustavi, the bishop's brother and five other noblemen. According to the dumbfounded Russian ambassadors, another 700 men perished in the ensuing fighting. To prove his loyalty, Konstantine sent his father's and brother's heads to Shah Abbas, but had their bodies buried at Alaverdi monastery. Before the ambassadors packed their bags, Konstantine pleaded mitigation: 'My father and brother . . . planned to poison me . . . My father and brother are dead not because the shah ordered it. It's nothing new in our family: my father [mistranslated for great-grandfather] killed his father and his brother. I've done the same, and I don't know myself whether good or bad will come of it.' He blamed his father for sending him to Iran and making him deny Christ. Mahmet-Beg, the shah's agent, told the ambassadors that Konstantine wept all night before the murders, not knowing whether to perish by God's hands (for committing parricide) or by the shah's hands (for not committing it).[16]

The new King Konstantine refused to swear loyalty to the tsar. The ambassadors left for Kartli, where Giorgi X also fobbed them off, despite an earlier invitation, on the grounds of imminent war against the Turks. Tatishchev and Ivanov now had their eye on Giorgi X's relatives, Teimuraz and Elene. Teimuraz, however, was a hostage in Iran, and Elene, although 'the apple of her father's eye' seemed, on inspection, to be rather thin and 'charming, but not extremely'. Giorgi would neither swear loyalty to the tsar

nor let his daughter (also Elene) leave with the ambassadors as Boris's future daughter-in-law; Giorgi allowed the proposed groom for Ksenia, another relative, Khosro ('23, knows Turkish, reads and writes Georgian, good, but not excellent,' reported the ambassadors), to travel only as far as the border. In fact, Giorgi x recalled his nephew and his ambassadors, Archbishop Teodose and an *aznauri* accompanying the Russians to Moscow, before they even left the Aragvi valley. Giorgi x feared antagonizing Shah Abbas, whom he had helped conquer Erevan in 1603, and who had given him land in Iran (in exchange for a valley in Lore).

When the Russian ambassadors reached Moscow, Boris was dead and the throne occupied by the False Dmitri. The next ambassador sent from Russia was killed by outlaws on the Volga. Russian diplomacy had failed, leaving Kartli and Kakhetia in thrall to an increasingly merciless Shah Abbas.

13
King Teimuraz I

✠

Now I am amazed at the remarkable things I have done,
I dared to put my hand to things, as the wise advise,
Although I longed to let my tears flow with grief,
That would need the eloquence of St John Climacus himself.
King Teimuraz I, *The Martyrdom of Queen Ketevan*

After king aleksandre of kakhetia was murdered, everything fell apart in eastern Georgia. Russia left the scene in 1605 when Buturlin and his army were annihilated in Dagestan by the Shamkhal and his Turkish auxiliaries. After sending her cousin Bagrat on a futile mission to Moscow, Ketevan, King Davit of Kakhetia's single-minded widow, ordered her parricidal brother-in-law Konstantine killed. At the time, he was, on Shah Abbas's orders, leading 10,000 Iranians and Kakhetians against Shirvan, facing stiff Ottoman resistance at Shemakha. Here, at midnight, Kakhetian rebels burst into his tent; Konstantine hacked his way out and, while the Ottomans swarmed over his headquarters, escaped to Ardabil to seek help from the shah. On 22 October Konstantine returned with fresh forces; the Kakhetians, helped by Kartlians, confronted and killed him at Belaknis Tsqali.

Shah Abbas defeated Sinan Paşa's Ottoman army by Lake Urmiye. Then in spring 1606 he assembled an army in Karabagh: Queen Ketevan asked Abbas to confirm her sixteen-year-old son Teimuraz as king. Abbas 'blessed' Teimuraz, little suspecting how unruly a vassal Teimuraz would prove. To further Teimuraz's prospects of ruling all Georgia, Ketevan married him to Ana, Mamia Gurieli's daughter; Ana gave Teimuraz his only five years of happiness.

Abbas was preoccupied with subduing Kartli, lest it, like Kakhetia, seek Russian patronage. That year King Giorgi X died in his summer residence, his tongue stung by a bee when he bit into a cake. Abbas moved north, cleared Lore and Dmanisi of Ottoman garrisons and made the Tbilisi

garrison capitulate: he appointed Deli Mahmed Khan to govern the capital. Kartli's nobility asked Abbas to confirm Giorgi X's only son, fourteen-year-old Luarsab, as king. Luarsab seemed, like Teimuraz, a malleable youth: withdrawing to Shirvan, Abbas assented.

Teimuraz soon showed defiance: he would not let the Kakhetian army help Abbas besiege Shemakha. His mother Ketevan, then at the shah's court, offered her own 1,000 guardsmen (Abbas refused them). In 1608, however, Luarsab of Kartli won Iranian approval by attacking the Ottomans in Samtskhe, a war prompted by his grandmother Elene, widow of Manuchar II, Samtskhe's last atabag. After 25 years hiding in forests, Elene hoped, with Iranian and Kartlian support, to see her infant, another Manuchar, become atabag. (She had discussed this in Isfahan with the Portuguese diplomat Antonio de Gouvea,[1] the shah and King Aleksandre of Kakhetia.) Now the shah sheltered young Manuchar, but gave Elene virtually nothing, although she offered him sovereignty over Samtskhe. Luarsab's Kartlians and Armenians briefly recaptured Akhaltsikhe, but Elene soon had to flee to Kartli.

The Ottomans put Yusuf Paşa, a Muslim Georgian, in charge of Samtskhe and made Luarsab pay for his chivalry. In June 1609 the Paşa of Samtskhe sent Crimean Tatars,[2] 'men in wolf skins', to occupy southern Kartli: they nearly caught Luarsab in his summer residence, but their guide Teodore, a captured priest, deliberately misled the Tatars, for which he was tortured and beheaded. Luarsab, together with the military genius Giorgi Saakadze, prefect of Tbilisi, despite heavy casualties, pushed the Ottomans back to Akhaltsikhe. The routed Tatars improvised bridges over the Kura, but still faced Saakadze's cavalry, which forded the river and met Tatar swords with musket-fire at the battle of Tashiskari. Important prisoners, and the heads of unimportant prisoners, were sent to Shah Abbas, to prove Luarsab's valour. Impressed, the shah withdrew his garrison from Tbilisi and let Luarsab rule untrammelled.

Teimuraz and Luarsab were invited to spend the summer of 1610 hunting with Shah Abbas. (Teimuraz, who now had two sons, Aleksandre and Levan, then prized feasting and hunting above politics.) Shah Abbas added Luarsab's sister Tinatin to his harem. Very soon, however, the shah's relationships with the two kings soured. Dissension began when Luarsab followed Giorgi Saakadze's political advice. Twenty years older than Luarsab and better educated, Saakadze was a lesser noble whose father had been King Simon's treasurer;[3] he believed in economic development, centralized monarchy, and ultimately in reuniting Georgia. An experienced *mouravi* (provincial governor), he unsettled traditional lords by forming a political party of *mokidebulni katsni* (dependent men), many of them followers of the Ksani and Aragvi dukes and the *mukhranbatoni*. In 1611 Luarsab married Saakadze's sister Makrine: Saakadze's elevation alarmed Kartli's aris-

tocrats, especially Shadiman Baratashvili, who persuaded King Luarsab that Saakadze was an Iranian agent. Luarsab divorced Makrine, and authorized Baratashvili to kill Saakadze. On 20 May 1612 Saakadze was lured to a hunt, but a penitent conspirator, Baaka Kherkheulidze, warned him off (for which Baaka's nose was cut off). (Jean Chardin, fifty years later, heard another version: Luarsab's mother forbade him to marry Makrine; Saakadze then reproached the king for treating Makrine as a concubine; frustrated, Luarsab ordered Saakadze's murder at a banquet, but a waiter tipped Saakadze off; he pretended to answer a call of nature, and galloped bareback to Iran.[4]) After ten years in Iran Saakadze became regent to the shah's heir, while Abbas directed his malevolence at Luarsab.

Teimuraz's queen Ana developed a throat tumour. For 40 days she could swallow only a little bread and brandy; her doctors operated in vain. On 10 May 1612, heartbroken, Teimuraz donated 37 peasant households to Alaverdi monastery to pray for her soul. Shah Abbas felt only rage when Teimuraz, like Luarsab, refused to console himself by another summer's hunting. Abbas then insisted that Teimuraz marry Luarsab's elder sister Khorashan, although the Orthodox Church forbade cousins to marry (King Aleksandre of Kakhetia was grandfather to both Teimuraz and Khorashan): Luarsab and Teimuraz thus both became Abbas's brothers-in-law.

Terrorized by the shah, the two kings began demoting, even executing their pro-Iranian noblemen like the Choloqashvilis. Abbas had a Georgian mother: many Iranian generals and provincial governors were Georgian, such as Imam Quli Khan (Undiladze), the governor of southern Persia, who in 1624 dutifully inflicted the torture to which Abbas condemned Queen Ketevan. But anger at Luarsab and Teimuraz generated Abbas's genocidal plan to deport or exterminate Kakhetia's and Kartli's Christians and replace them with Türkmens as a bulwark against Russian advances.

When King Rostom of Imeretia died childless in 1605, Kutaisi's nobility crowned his illegitimate brother Giorgi III, who at first kept western Georgia peaceful. The rulers agreed that their salvation lay in Iranian help against Turkey. In 1609 Mamia Gurieli (1600–25) relied on marital links – his daughter Ana was King Teimuraz's queen – to win Iranian protection; he also allied himself to Manuchar Dadiani of Mingrelia and reconquered Ajaria from the Ottomans. The irony of seventeenth-century Georgia is that the east resisted Iranian sovereignty, while the west sought Iranian protection against Ottoman sovereignty. But Shah Abbas's writ, even while warring with Turkey, never covered western Transcaucasia. No military help came. Against the Turks Mamia Gurieli tried to enlist Cossacks, who occasionally crossed the Black Sea from the Dnepr or the Don to raid Ottoman ports. In 1611 Manuchar Dadiani was fatally unhorsed while hunting. Mingrelia was now ruled by the fourteen-year-old Levan II Dadiani.

Levan II grew up at the court of his grandfather, King Aleksandre of Kakhetia; although supervised by his uncle, Giorgi Liparitiani, his fractious passions soon plunged western Georgia into turmoil.

In October 1613 Shah Abbas moved his army to Ganja, where he assured the Ottoman ambassadors that he respected the truce negotiated by the Georgian princess Gulchara. Next spring, he turned on Kakhetia, demanding Teimuraz's sons as hostages. After taking counsel, Teimuraz sent his mother Ketevan and his younger son, Aleksandre, to Iran. The shah insisted; reluctantly, the Kakhetians sent the heir, Levan. Shah Abbas then demanded Teimuraz's attendance. At this point war broke out.

The Kakhetians had no time to prepare defences. On 21 March 1614 one Iranian army under Deli Mahmed Khan, familiar with the terrain, invaded via Kartli; another came from Shirvan. More Kakhetians surrendered or fled than fought. Many distrusted Teimuraz: he had killed a hero, Kaikhosro Omanishvili, who had crushed Dagestani raiders, but whose prestige Teimuraz envied. The king's army retreated over the mountains to Mukhrani in Kartli. Here, King Luarsab joined the retreat: both armies sought asylum in Imeretia. Abbas occupied the Kakhetian capital (then Gremi), converted Alaverdi cathedral to a mosque, confiscated Teimuraz's valuables and deported 30,000 Kakhetian peasants (survivors of the trek became farmers in central Iran), replacing them with Muslims from Karabagh and Shirvan. The Iranian army looted the kingdom for 50 days. Two Muslims took power: Isa Khan (King Aleksandre's grandson) became puppet-king, and a Davit Jandieri his vizier.

Shah Abbas then occupied Gori and Surami fortresses and invited the two kings to negotiate. Teimuraz refused; a turncoat nobleman Shadiman Baratashvili was sent to capture him. From Gori the shah threatened Giorgi III: Imeretia would be hit 'with whips and axes' and have nothing but millet to eat if the two fugitive kings were not surrendered. Still united, Giorgi of Imeretia, Levan Dadiani and Mamia Gurieli consulted Teimuraz and Luarsab at Geguti castle and sent Abbas the message, 'We Mingrelians have more than whips and axes'. At the Catholicos's insistence, however, Giorgi and the princes of Mingrelia and Guria sent valuable presents and a conciliatory letter arguing that if the shah invaded, the Ottomans might consider it a *casus belli*.

Luarsab still believed, unlike Teimuraz and King Giorgi of Imeretia, that he could assuage the shah: he surrendered in October 1614, thus saving Kartli from the fate of Kakhetia. Abbas took Luarsab with him, first to Tbilisi, which the Iranians garrisoned, then to Karabagh. Luarsab was even taken hunting. But the Iranians heard from the Ottomans that both Luarsab and Teimuraz had offered the sultan allegiance if war broke out between Iran and Turkey. Luarsab was told to accept Islam: he refused and was thrown into the grim prison of Gulab near Shiraz.

Ottoman–Iranian hostilities did break out in May 1615; Teimuraz seized the moment to send agents to Kakhetia and exploit anger at Iranian occupation. The vizier himself, Davit Jandieri, led a revolt, using the Alaverdi Church festival as a cover for armed 'pilgrims' to slaughter the *kizilbash* garrison. Teimuraz, with a small Gurian and Mingrelian army, crossed northern Kartli and met Jandieri on the border, the river Aragvi: war spread through Kakhetia into Shirvan. Unfortunately, because the Ottoman army postponed its invasion, Abbas had 15,000 men to crush the Georgian revolt: Ali Quli Khan moved from Tbilisi to Tsitsamuri, where Teimuraz's escape route to Imeretia could be cut. Muslim Georgians in the shah's army leaked the Iranian plans to Teimuraz, who crossed the river Aragvi and led an attack on Ali Quli Khan's camp, routing the army, drowning many in the Aragvi and Kura, and taking so much booty that subsequently 'a camel sold for just one *abaza* [a silver coin of about four grams]'. The victory was hollow: Teimuraz won no outside support and in 1616 Abbas rounded up his Muslim vassals, and the Dagestanis, into a punitive expedition. Kakhetians fled to the forests, improvised moats and ramparts around refuges, destroyed ferries and bridges, but the Iranians, like the Mongols and Seljüks, turned the country into a desert. Abbas appointed Bagrat Khan, Daud-Khan's son, as Kartli's puppet-king; the shah's army flooded Kakhetia, inflicting on the Kakhetians a 'Second Coming' to punish Teimuraz's pigheadedness. Before their exit was blocked, Teimuraz and his closest allies fled to Imeretia.

Once Teimuraz fled, the Ottomans attacked Iran, driving Abbas south to defend Erzurum, Kars and Erevan. Kakhetia's breathing space was short: the Ottoman surge failed; a new truce was brokered. As refugees were returning to Kakhetia through the heavy snows of 1616–17, they met Iranian soldiers; thousands more Georgians were deported to Iran, or enslaved by Dagestanis. Some 100,000 were killed, twice as many deported to Iran: Kakhetia had perhaps a third of its inhabitants left. In spring 1617 more returning refugees were rounded up, and Abbas partitioned the country. Kakhetia east of the river Iori joined Ganja under Peikar Khan; western Kakhetia merged into Bagrat Khan's Kartli. Türkmen flocks grazed the empty countryside, and Abbas moved to Kartli, recruiting more soldiers.

Kartli, demoralized under an ineffectual Bagrat Khan (who resided in Bolnisi and controlled only lower Kartli), declared for the shah; Giorgi Saakadze and his relative, the shah's steward Bezhan Saakadze, Iran's most trusted Georgian, tried to reassure Kartli's nobility and to dissuade the Iranians from committing atrocities. They even saved Kakhetians of Khornabuji from deportation.

Western Georgia was meanwhile staving off Ottoman aggression. The Turks blockaded Black Sea ports, to stop salt or iron reaching the interior. In 1614 Guria and Mingrelia petitioned the sultan for relief, but their

envoys were imprisoned. Eventually, on 13 December 1614 Omar Paşa and the missionary Ludovico Grangiero met Mamia II Gurieli in Batumi; in exchange for tribute, the embargo on Guria was lifted. A few months later, Mingrelia, Abkhazia and, apparently, Imeretia also signed up. Annual tax of a quarter *kurush* (six grams of silver) per household (the Abkhaz paid in hunting dogs and falcons), plus rolls of cloth, and scores of young male and female slaves, burdened the impoverished people. The Turks conceded that Guria and Mingrelia could forbid armed Turks entry. At least, the two principalities and the kingdom of western Georgia forgot their disputes for a time. In 1616 Cossacks were raiding ports all round the southern Black Sea; they were rumoured to have landed at Mingrelia, sending 40 men to reconnoitre a route to Iran. The Cossacks were, however, as likely to loot their fellow Orthodox Gurians and Mingrelians as they were the Ottomans.

Teimuraz travelled further west, venturing onto Turkish soil in 1618 to win a promise from Khalil Paşa that the Ottomans would liberate and reinstate Kakhetia. On that basis, Teimuraz incorporated his Kakhetians into the Ottoman army, only to find the promises negated by a new Ottoman–Iranian treaty that resurrected the 1555 Treaty of Amasya.

In 1618 Teimuraz, unaware that Russia was in similar chaos, sent letters to Moscow: the rulers of Kakhetia, Guria, Imeretia and Mingrelia declared their new-found solidarity in asking Russia to protect the exiled Christian king from Iran. The Russians responded clumsily, enraging Shah Abbas by insisting he reinstate Teimuraz and Luarsab.[5]

Over the next four years, Abbas punished Teimuraz horribly. In 1620 he castrated both his sons: Levan died almost instantly, Aleksandre went mad and died shortly afterwards. In 1622 Abbas had Luarsab strangled with a bowstring, and then divorced Luarsab's sister Makrine, marrying her off to Peikar Khan. Abbas gave Teimuraz's mother, Ketevan, an ultimatum: when she refused to accept Islam, on 22 September 1624 she was subjected to indescribable torture and death, with only an Augustinian missionary, Ambrogio, to comfort her. (Abbas had murdered Ketevan's Basilian confessor Moses in 1619 on a trumped-up charge of adultery.) Augustinian missionaries brought her head, her heart and a clot of blood to Teimuraz for burial.[6]

The shah's paranoiac distrust excluded nobody. He summoned Giorgi Saakadze and Zurab, duke of Aragvi; Saakadze's son Paata and Zurab's wife were taken hostage. Saakadze cemented his alliance to Zurab by undertaking to retrieve Luarsab's sister from Peikar Khan and thus make Zurab brother-in-law to both kings of Kartli and Kakhetia. Teimuraz, however, wanted to keep Zurab closer to him than to Saakadze, and had Zurab marry his young daughter Darejan, although her mother Queen Khorashan objected to a non-royal groom.

Intent on a final solution to Georgia, warned by Peikar Khan of an imminent Kakhetian uprising, Shah Abbas entered Kartli in early 1625 with what he claimed was a bridal procession: he brought, together with twelve khans, his granddaughter Jehan-Banu to marry off to Simon-Khan, who had been appointed 'king' of Kartli after Bagrat Khan's death in 1619. In spring Abbas's army was at Mukhrani, ready to annihilate any Kakhetian resistance. Abbas's general Qarchikha-Khan called the Kakhetians up 'for war on Imeretia', then told them that, as Christians, they were not trusted to fight fellow-Christians, but must disarm and go home; then, on the pretext of handing out presents, began leading them to an execution tent. Panicking Kakhetians scattered. Saakadze, concealing his new allegiance, intercepted a courier from Shah Abbas with instructions to slaughter all armed Kartlians, including Saakadze. By disclosing this plot, Saakadze united Kartli and Kakhetia behind him. He deviously 'advised' the Iranian general to split his army into small groups and send them into Kakhetia. Qarchikha-Khan's headquarters were then easily overrun by a force led by Saakadze, his son Avtandil, as well as Kartlian and Kakhetian noblemen. Annunciation Day (25 March) brought an extraordinary victory at Martqopi east of Tbilisi: Saakadze's and Duke Zurab's army massacred a 30,000-strong *kizilbash* army, took their arsenal, besieged Tbilisi's citadel before the puppet-king Simon Khan could arrive, and drove him south to Karabagh and Peikar Khan east to Bardavi. Within days, all Kartli and Kakhetia was in Georgian hands. (Only Tbilisi's Iranian garrison, its water supplies cut off, still held out.) Teimuraz was then waiting at Gonio for a ship to take him to Russia. Now he hurried east to be crowned king of Kakhetia and of Kartli. Abbas, like Iran's and Turkey's chroniclers, was aghast at this debacle.

Other Iranian vassals became restive. Abbas, in a murderous frenzy which would devour his own sons, beheaded Saakadze's son Paata and sent the head to Giorgi, leaving the body for the crows (Paata's body was eventually buried in the Saakadze mausoleum). In return, Saakadze dispatched severed *kizilbash* heads to the shah, and live foot soldiers to the Ottoman grand vizier Hafiz Paşa at Diyarbekir. Saakadze sent the Turks a further mission, headed by his son Ioram, but the Ottomans would not take the bait: capturing Baghdad was their priority, not exploiting the Georgians' victories.

Abbas's counterattack came in June 1625. His armies were led by the khans of Shirvan and Erevan and by a Georgian, Khosro-Mirza, a son of Daud Khan, later known as King Rostom of Kartli. They camped in the Algeti valley at Marabda, southeast of Tbilisi. The Georgians were higher up in the Kojori gorge; at the military council Saakadze recommended waiting in the gorge where the Iranians could not deploy their enormous army. But he was overruled by Teimuraz, the bishops and senior princes of

Kartli and Kakhetia, who wanted to engage the Iranians in open country before they were fully assembled. The battle of Marabda proved Saakadze right: the shah's English artillery, protected by ramparts and disciplined ranks of musketeers, the first row kneeling, the second standing, the third on horseback, the fourth on camels, mowed down the Georgian cavalry charge. Only desperate bravery enabled the Georgians to break through, while seeing Khan Amirgune of Erevan mortally wounded demoralized many enemy soldiers. As triumphant Georgians looted supplies and routed the *kizilbash*, a belated Azeri army forced the Georgian cavalry to retreat to Kojori, and slaughtered their infantry. Marabda was a Pyrrhic victory: Kartli and Kakhetia lost some 10,000 men and leaders, including Teimuraz Mukhranbatoni, two bishops, Davit Jandieri and nine Kherkheulidze brothers. The surviving Georgian army had to use guerrilla tactics to save Kartli's cities, while the Iranians sent an expedition to the high Caucasus to rescue Teimuraz and Saakadze's high-ranking prisoners. The expedition was hacked to pieces by Saakadze on its way home; only Khosro-Mirza escaped, with his prisoners, to the main *kizilbash* army.

Georgians won the battles, but lost the war. The Iranians bribed hostile princes: Kaikhosro Baratashvili became commander of Lower Kartli, and prefect of Tbilisi. Some bishops anointed Simon-Khan as 'king' of Kartli, but first he had to report to Karabagh, where Abbas ordered him to pursue Saakadze and capture his Samtskhe fortresses. Losing half of his army forced Abbas to let vassals rule eastern Georgia. He abandoned plans to cleanse it of Christians.

Saakadze sought asylum in Samtskhe, which was still partly Ottoman-held, despite Iran's victories in 1624. Atabag Manuchar IV, disappointed in Abbas, switched sides and let Saakadze's band foment anti-Iranian rebellion, even mounting an attack at Aspindza. Manuchar went in person to Istanbul, and Saakadze sent the Sultan envoys; Murad IV, who was again concentrating on Baghdad, gave vague encouragement and authorized the Beglarbeg of Batum to support Saakadze, telling Manuchar that a Christian atabag might rule Samtskhe. (In 1628 Manuchar returned, but was poisoned by his uncle Beka, who took over Samtskhe as Safar Paşa of Çıldır.) In 1626 Saakadze left Samtskhe to confer with King Giorgi of Imeretia, Levan Dadiani of Mingrelia and the Catholicos of Abkhazia.

Unity in western Georgia was shattered more by adultery than politics. In 1620, after two years of marriage, Aleksandre, heir to Imeretia's throne, rejected his wife Tamar (daughter of the Gurieli and, says Father Zampi,[7] 'of rare beauty'), accusing her of adultery with a Kutaisi merchant; she and her baby son Bagrat returned to Guria. Abkhazia and Levan Dadiani's Mingrelia supported the offended Gurieli, sealing a broader alliance in 1621, when Levan's sister Mariam married Simon, son of Mamia Gurieli, and Levan married Tamunia, daughter of Prince Seteman Shervashidze of

Abkhazia. King Giorgi's Imeretia, blockaded by hostile Black Sea principalities, consequently starved. Quarrelling over land rights, an Imeretian noble, Paata Tsulukidze (known as Tsutski, meaning 'mongrel'), crossed to the enemy and became Levan Dadiani's vizier. Giorgi prepared to attack Mingrelia, but Levan Dadiani struck on 9 December 1623, exiling the king and capturing Imeretian noblemen. Levan introduced an old Seljük and Mongol practice: prisoners had to be ransomed, thus making internecine war in western Georgia lucrative.

A breach with Abkhazia stopped Levan Dadiani ruling all western Georgia: Levan accused Tamunia of adultery with his vizier Tsutski, cut off her nose and ears and, with an invasion force, took her back to Abkhazia, looting his father-in-law's lands. Levan poisoned his two sons by Tamunia, but dared not kill Tsutski, whom he handed to his brother-in-law Mamia Gurieli for custody. Levan Dadiani then abducted Darejan Chiladze, wife of his uncle and former regent, Giorgi Liparitiani. Even Mingrelian public opinion was outraged: Giorgi Liparitiani put on mourning and held a mock funeral *in absentia* for Darejan; fortunately, he died before civil war erupted.[8]

The tables were turned on Levan Dadiani, however. He had infuriated Abkhazia and Imeretia: now Guria, too, was alarmed, and released Tsutski, who plotted to replace Levan Dadiani with his respected younger brother Ioseb. Levan survived an Abkhaz assassin, who stabbed him in the back as he leant over a balustrade; he then gouged out his brother Ioseb's eyes (confiscating all but a pauper's portion of his property), strangled and quartered Tsutski, firing the remains from a cannon. Levan looted Abkhazia (taking dogs and falcons in lieu of money). In 1625 Levan attacked the new Gurieli, Simon (who had just murdered his brother Mamia while he slept). Levan told Simon: 'Since you killed your brother I don't wish to be your brother-in-law: give me my sister back.' Simon gave an armed response, but was captured. Levan blinded him, too, releasing him a year later to be a monk in Jerusalem (Simon lived until 1672, keeping in touch with his ex-wife Mariam, who stayed with her brother in Mingrelia.) Levan made Simon's brother, Catholicos Malakia of Abkhazia, the new Gurieli. Guria became a Mingrelian vassal, especially as the Catholicos's lands were largely in Mingrelia; Levan Dadiani began calling himself Levan of Guria, too.

Kutaisi's castle walls and his own lack of artillery kept Levan Dadiani from total domination. To ward off the aggrieved Abkhaz, he employed all Mingrelia's workforce, including the bishops' men, building a 40-mile wall from the coast to the Caucasus and guarding it with musketeers in wooden watchtowers. Thereafter, Levan Dadiani regularly raided Imeretia, taking cattle and hostages for ransom. Imeretia starved, while Mingrelia, to judge by Evliya Çelebi's reports, had 60 large villages and, inland, where

no Turkish tax collectors ventured, rich vineyards and orchards. Sultan Murad IV was reportedly delighted with western Georgia's disarray: no longer could they mobilize 50,000 horsemen against Turkey. To keep Imeretia at bay, Murad promised Dadiani Turkish cavalry in exchange for smelted iron. Çelebi lists as tribute, apart from the usual Ottoman taxes, between 40 and 50 boys and girls, and 1,000 lambswool stockings.

The besieged King Giorgi of Imeretia and the dethroned King Teimuraz of Kakhetia could offer each other only moral support. By now Teimuraz despaired of help from either Turks or Russians. Prompted by Catholic missionaries in Gori, Gremi and Tbilisi, and advised by Pietro della Valle, an Italian envoy in Iran with connections to Georgians in Isfahan (della Valle eventually married the orphaned child of Georgian deportees), Teimuraz conceived a wild plan to incite a European war against his oppressors. He exploited the dissidence of Georgians in Iranian service after the murders of Teimuraz's family: these dissidents included the Undiladze family, of whom Alaverdi Khan governed the province of Fars, Imam Quli Khan that of Shiraz, and Daud Khan that of Ganja, and others, like Abaza-Paşa of Erzurum. Teimuraz knew the shah was fighting to win back the Persian Gulf island of Hormuz, now a Portuguese trading post.

In November 1625 Teimuraz sent an ambassador, Nikoloz Irubakidze-Choloqashvili (known in Europe as Nicolas Erbachi or Don Niceforo Irbaquez),[9] first to Madrid to lobby the king of Spain, then to the pope. 'If Christian rulers decide,' Teimuraz's letter ran, 'we could easily overthrow the Sultan . . . we are ready to go through Cappadocia to Constantinople . . . not in our own interests, but exclusively to serve our Lord God . . . we shall strive to see your Majesty take the throne of Constantinople.' Teimuraz implied that he was a Catholic (a letter from Patriarch Theophanes said so), that he could deploy 100,000 men, and take Hormuz for Spain. Teimuraz left it vague whether he was fomenting a war against the Ottomans, against the shah, or against both. He took no heed of the Spanish and papal interests in good relations with Iran, to offset the threat of Turkey. He was unaware that the shah, with English help, had already recovered Hormuz from the Portuguese.

When Irubakidze met the king of Spain in June 1627, speaking through a Greek–Spanish interpreter, he persuaded the king and his council, who knew of Teimuraz's and Saakadze's victory at Martqopi, that the Georgians were a serious force. (Irubakidze was perhaps ignorant of Teimuraz's and Saakadze's internecine battle at Bazaleti in 1626.) The Spaniards rewarded Irubakidze with 2,000 ducats, but procrastinated: they needed Pope Urban VIII's opinion and that of the viceroys of Naples and Sicily, and would send ambassadors to Georgia to assess the situation. Once in Rome, Irubakidze found he was rumbled: the pope knew that Teimuraz was still Orthodox. Only the Vatican's Congregatio de Propa-

ganda Fide took an interest in Georgia, which resulted in their casting Georgian type and producing the first printed primer, dictionary and liturgical material in Georgian.[10] (The Georgian enlightenment flickered into life: in 1650 an Andrea from Mingrelia became the first Georgian to obtain a doctorate in Rome, but died shortly afterwards.[11])

In early 1626 Saakadze and Teimuraz resumed warfare, clearing Kartli and Kakhetia of Iranian garrisons. Their support came from the ordinary gentry, not the major princes; they were so successful that Simon Khan's rule barely extended beyond Tbilisi, and the Shamkhal of Dagestan stopped raiding Kakhetia. Teimuraz became effective ruler of both kingdoms, hindered only by Giorgi Saakadze's ambitions and charisma. Saakadze believed that Teimuraz could not unite all Georgia: he therefore contacted Giorgi of Imeretia, proposing Giorgi's son Aleksandre as heir to the thrones of all three kingdoms. King Giorgi exchanged letters of intent with Saakadze, betrothed his daughter Khvaramze to Saakadze's son Avtandil, and then sent soldiers via Samtskhe. Saakadze also visited Levan Dadiani in Mingrelia and Catholicos Malakia in Guria, where he received the same sworn support. Some noblemen, notably Kaikhosro Mukhranbatoni, who was a Bagratid, and Iese, duke of Ksani, shared Saakadze's views. Others loathed Saakadze's overweening ambition and took Teimuraz's side: Teimuraz's son-in-law Zurab, duke of Aragvi, brought him the finest warriors in Kartli. The real *casus belli*, however, was the disputed candidacies of King Teimuraz and Prince Aleksandre for the throne of reunited Georgia.

In autumn 1626 civil war broke out. At Bazaleti, by a lake 40 miles northwest of Tbilisi, Teimuraz's army defeated Saakadze's. Saakadze and his family fled to Turkey. For two years, he hoped for a comeback, converting yet again to Islam to please Murad IV, who made him Paşa of Konya. But Saakadze's Christian wine-drinking irritated many Ottomans: on 3 October 1629 Husrev Paşa ordered Saakadze, his son Avtandil and 40 followers to be slaughtered, the pretext being that Saakadze was setting off without permission to Mingrelia.

When Irubakidze returned home in 1629, let down by the Vatican and robbed in Istanbul, history had made his plans obsolete. Saakadze was dead. So was Shah Abbas. Shah Sefi, Abbas's grandson, had been enthroned by Iran's Georgian kingmaker, Khosro-Mirza (the future King Rostom of Kartli); the shah's nominee Simon Khan reigned in Tbilisi. Once influential Undiladzes were murdered or exiled. Saakadze's last living son Ioram waited in Constantinople for a Spanish mission that never arrived. In 1630 Pietro della Valle interceded for Teimuraz with the pope in Rome, but achieved nothing.

Triumphant after Bazaleti, Teimuraz informally divided Kartli between himself (Inner Kartli, centred on Gori) and Simon Khan (Tbilisi and the southeast), and won Sefi's recognition as vassal king of Kakhetia. Rid of

Saakadze, Teimuraz now suspected his son-in-law Zurab of regal ambitions. In 1630, at Teimuraz's instigation (which the king admitted years later, when he ceded three villages in contrition), Zurab hired a Circassian known as Giorgi to kill Simon Khan in his sleep. (Zurab was apparently promised Tianeti province, and the Circassian lands on the Iori.) Zurab also abducted Simon Khan's queen Jehan Begum, but refrained from raping her after Teimuraz reminded him that she was a shah's granddaughter. Teimuraz invited Zurab to dinner and beheaded him. He sent Zurab's head to Shah Sefi, thus killing two birds with one stone. He proved his own innocence and loyalty to the shah and to Khosro-Mirza, Simon Khan's uncle; he could now marry his widowed daughter Darejan to Crown Prince Aleksandre of Imeretia, and thereby unite Georgia's three kingdoms.

Khosro-Mirza, however, had ambitions: he persuaded Shah Sefi to give the throne of Kakhetia, not to Teimuraz, but to him, as King Rostom. Even in Iran, Rostom's royal claims were disputed: one Undiladze (Alaverdi Khan, governor of Fars) supported his son Daud-Khan Beglarbeg of Karabagh, the brother of Imam Quli Khan of Shirvan. Teimuraz took Daud Khan's side, and together they ravaged Barda and Karabagh. They stayed in Barda, waiting for back-up from the Armenian Catholicos (Daud-Khan's relative), but the Catholicos's 40,000 Armenian Christians who would free Transcaucasia in seven days never materialized. Teimuraz contented himself with looting, returning to Gori with Daud-Khan, the Armenian Catholicos and their baggage trains. The shah executed one Undiladze, Imam Quli Khan, and demanded that Teimuraz hand over the other, Daud-Khan, if he wanted a pardon. Instead, Teimuraz smuggled Daud-Khan out to Turkey and faced the wrath of Shah Sefi and of King Rostom, who took the throne of Kartli in 1632, while Selim Khan, with a large army, including many Georgians, usurped Kakhetia.

Stranded in Gori with no realm and no subjects, Teimuraz negotiated with Theatine missionaries. He demanded not spiritual comfort, but the 13,000 piastres he believed they possessed, to spend on arms. Imeretia was an unlikely refuge, since Levan Dadiani had renewed his attacks, and Rostom had sent 2,000 cavalry to intercept Teimuraz. Nevertheless, the missionaries in Gori noted, Teimuraz managed to escape on 18 February 1633.

Rostom also needed support; like Simon-Khan before him, he presented himself as a Muslim king who would shield Kartli from Iranian intervention without restricting Christianity. Muslim and 'born of a concubine' (Daud-Khan's son by a servant girl), Rostom was, however, doubly illegitimate; at 67 he was past his prime, and, despite marriage to a Georgian noblewoman, Ketevan Abashishvili (who soon died), and a second marriage in 1633 to Mariam, Levan Dadiani's sister, he had no heir. But Rostom was admired for tolerance and diplomacy, a long career from poverty to the peak of Shah Abbas's meritocracy, association in Iran with Giorgi Saakadze,

knowledge of Georgian and patronage of the arts. Shah Sefi regarded him as a foster-father, calling him 'my brother the wali of Georgia': Rostom's reign from 1632 to 1658 was relatively peaceful and prosperous.

Rostom began energetically; he rebuilt and garrisoned Gori citadel. He had the Inner Kartli's nobles kiss his feet, laying waste one recalcitrant nobleman's lands. Then, in 'a country ravaged enough' he replaced Iranian soldiers with more acceptable Shirvanis, and Teimuraz's appointees with exiles returning from Iran. Ploughing and sowing began again. Some resisted Rostom's centralizing policies: Datuna, duke of Aragvi, had to be invited to a truce at Mukhrani, and then killed (Datuna's brother Zaal then swore allegiance to Teimuraz).

Rostom's marriage to Levan Dadiani's sister Mariam, approved by Sefi, made him Teimuraz's rival as a future unifier of Georgia. Alliance with Mingrelia also furthered Iran's hopes of conquering Imeretia: gratified, Sefi sent wedding presents and paid Dadiani 50,000 marchil (about one and a half tonnes of silver). (The marriage brokers included the diplomat Nikoloz Irubakidze: Irubakidze escorted with the groom's party Gori's missionaries, who sought parishes in Guria and Mingrelia friendlier than Islamic-ruled Kartli.) The marriage was meant to coincide with Levan's and Rostom's joint invasion of Imeretia, but King Giorgi blocked the Imeretian–Kartlian frontier, and Rostom's armed wedding suite had to take a circuitous route via Akhaltsikhe. King Giorgi intercepted Dadiani on his way to the marriage, but lost the subsequent battle of 1634 at Kaka Bridge near Baghdati and was captured (Kaka Bridge now means to Georgians 'deadly trap'). This marriage enriched Levan Dadiani, for the Iranians, fearing that Imeretia might seek Russian help, bribed him with 50,000 silver kurush, and an annual payment of 1,000 tumans (gold coins of three grams).

Teimuraz returned from exile via Dagestan to Ananuri in the highlands, gathered Kakhetian supporters and rebel Kartlians such as Duke Zaal of Aragvi and Duke Iese of Ksani, but was soon expelled. Teimuraz then offered Rostom peace and Sefi a bride, Teimuraz's daughter, Tinatin. In 1634 Sefi, though busy fighting Turkey, married Teimuraz's daughter (but later had her strangled). As Sefi's son-in-law, Teimuraz received 1,000 silver tumans, fine gowns, and restoration as Christian *wali* of Kakhetia. Teimuraz still repeatedly attempted between 1636 and 1642 to oust Rostom from Kartli, even trying to assassinate him in a bathhouse. In 1639 he petitioned the tsar of Russia for help and signed an oath of loyalty. Teimuraz attacked the Dagestani Dido people to clear the mountain passes for a Russian army: it never materialized. His hopes of exploiting Ottoman–Iranian conflict were dashed by another truce in 1639, which again partitioned Georgia on the lines of the Amasya treaty of 1555.

This truce lasted, intermittently, until 1723, blocking off Ottoman-dominated Imeretia from Iran-dominated Kartli. Aleksandre of Imeretia,

who took the throne in 1639, was besieged in Kutaisi by Levan Dadiani: he could not help his father-in-law Teimuraz. Levan Dadiani, who, despite professing Catholicism and asking the pope for more missionaries, incarnated all seven deadly sins except sloth, looted Imeretia even at Easter and Christmas. Samtskhe, too, was now barred to Teimuraz: Safar Paşa, although belonging to the atabags' Jaqeli family who would still inherit the atabagy, between 1628 and 1651 made the province completely Ottoman, taxing Christians for every soul (one drachma), cow (one abaza) and sheep (two shauri). Peasants emigrated, converted or were killed. Christianity went underground: Samtskhe's churches became mosques or crumbled; only the Georgian language persisted. Christians converted to Islam to avoid paying *haraç* (a tax on infidels); some converted to Catholicism, a confession which, unlike Georgian Orthodoxy, was protected by the Ottomans. Nevertheless, travellers like Jean Chardin report that Samtskhe was more prosperous than a century before, or than contemporary Imeretia: even Christian villages enjoyed a peace unknown in war-torn western Georgia. Moreover, to judge by extant Akhaltsikhe diaries, Georgians under Ottoman rule could visit relatives and friends in Imeretia. Ottoman serfdom was less oppressive than Imeretian or Mingrelian serfdom, and, ironically, an Ottoman Christian, unlike an Imeretian, could not be enslaved. (Nevertheless, Samtskhe did experience the turmoil that beset Mingrelia and Imeretia: there were notorious scoundrels, such as the Piraghias. Piraghishvili, for instance, was a priest who converted to Islam and bought a hereditary lordship in Javakheti. His line ended when the last Piraghia returned his wife to her father, Atabeg of Ajaria; was besieged in his castle of Khertvisi by his father-in-law's army; and blew himself up on a barrel of gunpowder.[12])

Teimuraz persisted: in 1642 he conspired with Catholicos Evdemoz Diasamidze (father-in-law to Teimuraz's son Davit), Zaal Saakadze and others to kill Rostom when the king was relaxing unguarded in the country. A conspirator betrayed the plot, and Rostom barricaded himself in Gori. Teimuraz, waiting in Tbilisi, fled to Kakhetia, but the Catholicos and others were caught. Rostom had most of them blinded; the Catholicos was incarcerated in Tbilisi, then strangled and defenestrated. Saru Taqi, grand vizier to the new infant shah Abbas II, sent Rostom's nephew, Adam Sultan Andronikashvili,[13] to rule Kakhetia and kill Teimuraz. Teimuraz's womenfolk, however, interceded with King Rostom, who pardoned Teimuraz and his surviving followers: by 1644 Adam Andronikashvili had no reason to pacify Kakhetia. An arbiter was appointed to judge Teimuraz for the murder of Simon Khan: he sentenced Teimuraz to pay a blood price of three villages. Teimuraz, however, rejected the verdict: after a year's arguing he took back his villages and expelled Rostom's officials.

Again, war broke out. This time Teimuraz was roundly defeated and his last surviving son Davit was killed. Heirless, with his kingdom ruined,

Teimuraz was abandoned. The nobility offered to deliver him to Rostom. Queen Khorashan begged Rostom for mercy and for asylum in Alaverdi monastery for her and Teimuraz. Rostom referred the request to Isfahan. Queen Khorashan then asked for a horse, a mule and safe conduct to Imeretia. Chivalry, saintly forbearance, or a wise refusal to make Teimuraz a martyr, led Rostom to grant the ex-king and queen, and any Kakhetian willing to share their exile, 500 horses and mules and an escort to Imeretia, led by the new Catholicos Kristepore Amilakhori's men. In 1648 Teimuraz found asylum with his son-in-law, King Aleksandre. Rostom was undisputed king of Kartli and Kakhetia.

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *King Teimuraz I of Kakhetia (1589–1663)*. Teimuraz I ruled Kartli and Kakhetia at various times. He is depicted here (with his second wife Khorashan who died in 1659), by Castelli, the first, and for 100 years, only westerner to draw portraits of Georgian rulers.

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *Darejan 'the Devious' (1614–67)*. Darejan was daughter of King Teimuraz by Khorashan, and at times the queen of Imeretia.

RESIDENTIE PRINCIPALI ACQVISTATE IN ORIETE
dà nostri Padri sotto tre Pontefici cioè Vrbano VIII.
Innocentio X. & Alessandro VII.
Nuncius Regius
Georgianus

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *Nikoloz Irubakidze*. Also known as Nicolas Erbachi, he was Teimuraz I's envoy to western Europe in the 1620s.

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *Gori in the 1620s*.

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *Tamar Shervashidze*. Tamar, the first wife of Levan II Dadiani, is depicted after her mutilation and rejection at his hands.

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *Vamiq III Liparitiani*. Vamiq was prince of Mingrelia from 1658 to 1661.

Christus Dnus.
Vitam petiit tribuisti ei
Vivat Christus in aeternum.
Rex Israel accipe Coronam.
Ecclesiæ tuæ comedie ms.
Dicono ancora che sopra la spalla destra habbia un segno di Croce questo li dico publicamente
in quelli Regni io non l'ho veduto mà hebbe curiosità di domandarlo al medesimo Rè
quando lo curai infermo mà poi non li dissi altro.
Re Giorgiano, e detto dalli Orientali Meppe mtis giorgiani sanni che vuol dire
Rè comato da Dio et è in veneratione grande.

Cristoforo Castelli (1600–1659), *King Bagrat IV 'the Blind' of Imeretia (1617–1681).*
Bagrat ruled with interruptions from 1660.

14
Teimuraz Dispossessed

✠

Teimuraz, on arrival in Kutaisi, persuaded Aleksandre to adopt his grandson Giorgi. Giorgi would thus inherit both their thrones. Teimuraz then tried to resolve Imeretia's 25-year conflict with Levan Dadiani's Mingrelia, visiting Dadiani's capital, Zugdidi. But Dadiani was implacable. In 1634, after capturing Aleksandre's father, Giorgi, Levan ransomed him for most of Imeretia's silver and gold and the strategic left bank of the Tskhenistsqali, thus leaving Imeretia defenceless. Levan crippled Imeretia's economy by resettling its Jewish and Armenian merchants in Mingrelia. Imeretia might have been annexed by Kaikhosro Gurieli, had the nobility not enthroned the heir Aleksandre while King Giorgi was Dadiani's prisoner. Dadiani faced not only Imeretian fury, but also Ottoman anger at his links with Iran and with Cossack pirates. In 1634 Turks landed at the Kodori estuary and looted Dranda monastery. Dadiani then promised the Turks to keep the peace, and to pay his tribute, but the next year Dadiani refused Ottoman demands to help them invade Armenia.

Like Teimuraz, Dadiani sent a mission to Moscow: his envoy, a priest Gabriel Gegenava, was, however, detained for two years by Russians on the Terek river before being allowed to proceed; in Russia, his sycophancy was received coldly, possibly because Teimuraz had forewarned the Russians of Mingrelian and Gurian rapacity. In November 1639 Gegenava returned with two Russian ambassadors, Fedot Elchin and Pavel Zakhariev, and the text of an oath of loyalty. For six months Levan Dadiani ignored the ambassadors, claiming to be mourning his wife Darejan (who, this time, really had died). The Russians toured all the churches Levan had built;[1] fortunately, they could not read the inscriptions boasting of the massacres and pillaging that funded the commissioning of numerous silver-framed icons.

Levan was pious: in 1635 he gave the monastery of Christ's Sepulchre in Jerusalem an icon, 30 peasant households and extensive landholdings.[2]

Foreigners were struck by his contradictions: he was grasping, charging a monk who wanted to be a bishop 500 écus; he was cunning, leading Turks by mountain paths through the poorest villages to discourage their depredations; he was cruel, practising mutilation, torture, infanticide, inflicting ordeals and single combat on suspects. Yet he encouraged Jewish merchants and Greek craftsmen to settle; he loved Italian and French missionaries, particularly those with medical skills; he tirelessly dispensed justice and dealt with administrative minutia. Certainly, his subjects were even more ignoble: one Mingrelian nobleman exchanged his mother for a Turkish horse; another captured, shaved and shackled twelve priests, selling them into slavery to pay for a new bride.[3] No wonder that, when Jean Chardin arrived in Mingrelia, Father Zampi told him that he had come to the world's most barbarous and vicious country.[4]

Aleksandre of Imeretia reigned in full when Giorgi died in 1639. But he suffered badly when Dadiani made a French gunsmith he had captured cast him 30 cannon, and thus breached the walls of Kutaisi citadel that Aleksandre had thought impregnable (to his own noblemen, as well as the Mingrelians). Levan's icon inscriptions boast that in February 1646 Aleksandre watched helplessly from his castle as his country burned and enslaved prisoners screamed. Aleksandre's brother Mamuka resisted, but was taken in chains to Mingrelia. Despite Teimuraz's intervention in 1648, Aleksandre had to send as a hostage Bagrat, his son by his first and faithless wife; Mamuka and Bagrat remained prisoners for years.

Young Giorgi, heir to both Imeretia and Kakhetia, died in infancy. Aleksandre and Teimuraz saw Russian protection as their last chance. Aleksandre promised eternal submission to Russia; he assured Russia that Imeretia was only a week's march from Russian-held Circassia. Teimuraz asked the tsar to intercede with the shah, to end his exile and the persecution of Christians. In 1651, while the kings waited for a response, Dadiani's artillery demolished Kutaisi and Gelati (residence of the bishop, eventually Catholicos Zakaria Kvariani, Aleksandre's counsellor): the Mingrelians captured 40 Kakhetian nobles and a number of musketeers. Dadiani then gouged out Mamuka's eyes (the prince died in December 1653). Aleksandre complained to Kartli's king Rostom. In the 1630s Kartli's nobility had selected Mamuka as next king of Kartli, and smuggled him into the country. King Rostom, with the consent of Queen Mariam (Levan Dadiani's sister), solemnly cursed Dadiani for his outrage.

The two kings' embassy reached Moscow on 13 August 1649: Teimuraz asked for 20,000 armed men, for a marriage between his grandson Luarsab and the tsar's sister, for intercession with Shah Abbas II, and funding to reconquer Kakhetia; Aleksandre asked for Don Cossacks to suppress Levan Dadiani 'who has sided with the Turks'. Both offered their kingdoms as vassals of the Russian empire. Aleksandre's letter ran:

'King Teimuraz and the crown princes are yours. And I too from this day am your slave . . . I am your kingdom's slave, so are my lords and all my people, and all the land'. Ignorant of Russia's troubles with Sweden and Poland, the kings waited until July 1650, when two envoys, Nikifor Tolochanov and Aleksei Ievlev,[5] crossed one of the highest Ossetian passes, through Svanetia and Racha, down to Kutaisi. The envoys brought no Cossacks, for fear of provoking the Ottomans, but they had the text of an oath of loyalty. They had instructions to survey Imeretia, especially its holy places and its silver mines, and to impress on the two kings the necessity of swearing fealty to Russia. Aleksandre received them magnificently, but procrastinated. Tolochanov and Ievlev bribed Bishop Zakaria Kvariani and two other noblemen with 27 sable skins, lengths of best brocade, and goods 'worth 33 roubles, 52 altyn and 8 pence' to make Aleksandre swear loyalty to the tsar. In October 1651 Aleksandre signed an oath of fealty in his name and that of his son and brother. Envoys from Levan Dadiani came, asking for Don Cossacks to protect Mingrelia. Then the ambassadors were detained until spring 1652, when the passes into Ossetia reopened. They took with them as Aleksandre's envoys his treasurer Lomkats Japaridze and Archimandrite Artemon. Imeretia's nobility now split into three factions, pro-Russian, pro-Iranian and pro-Ottoman. In 1653 Teimuraz sent his grandson Erekle on a perilous journey for what would prove to be twenty years' exile in Russia; that year a delegation of Kakhetia's highlanders – Tush, Khevsur and Pshav – also reached Moscow, lobbying for Teimuraz.

But Teimuraz's prospects of reconquering Kartli and Kakhetia receded. King Rostom, now approaching 90, had adopted Luarsab I's great-grandson, also Luarsab, as heir. Kartli's princes resented yet another Persian-educated Muslim; Luarsab's death in 1652 from a bullet while out hunting was no accident. (The suspect was tried by single combat, wounded and incarcerated.) Rostom then chose Vakhtang, the 35-year-old head of the Mukhranbatoni branch of the Bagrations and sent him to Iran, where he took Islam and the name Shahnavaz ('Shah's beloved') and won the trust of Shah Abbas II. Shahnavaz-Vakhtang V, as ruler of Kartli, was sent back to Tbilisi. Rostom died in 1658 and was buried in Persia's religious capital, Qom. Shah Abbas II put Kakhetia, however, under the rule of Selim Khan, who settled at first 15,000, then 80,000 Türkmen families on its best land, building castles to protect the newcomers, thus provoking an uprising that engulfed all eastern Georgia.

In 1658 Teimuraz travelled to Moscow to plead his cause with Tsar Aleksei, who gently disillusioned him. On his way back Teimuraz learned of the death of another grandson, Luarsab; shortly after he reached Kutaisi in 1659, Queen Khorashan died; in 1660 Teimuraz's last ally, King Aleksandre of Imeretia, died. Heartbroken, Teimuraz stayed in the Imeretian

summer palace at Skanda, while Kartli's new king, Vakhtang v, invaded and deposed Aleksandre's widow and her stepson. Teimuraz was escorted as an honoured prisoner through Kartli to Shah Abbas II's court: the shah urged him to accept Islam, offered him meat on a fast day and, when Teimuraz declined, threw wine in his face and imprisoned him in Astarabad by the Caspian. Here Teimuraz took holy orders, and in 1661 died.

The political legacy of Teimuraz's 50-year struggle was nil. His ruthlessness and intelligence were nothing without, say, his grandfather Aleksandre of Kakhetia's diplomacy and patience. In literature, however, Teimuraz single-handedly revived Georgian poetry. In intervals of peace – his first years as king, his Imeretian exile – he translated much Persian poetry, and composed a moving poem on the martyrdom of his mother Queen St Ketevan. His verse dialogues, set to music and performed by masked actors to amuse the Russian envoys in Kutaisi, germinated Georgian theatre. He set a benchmark for later kings of Kartli and Kakhetia, whose poetry emulated and discussed, but rarely matched Teimuraz's.

Isolated in Skanda, or imprisoned in Astarabad, Teimuraz heard Kakhetia and Kartli explode. A Türkmen atrocity – raping a priest – spurred Zaal, duke of Aragvi, Shalva, duke of Ksani, and his brother Elizbar, bishop of Alaverdi, to lead a highlanders' uprising. The Kakhetians attacked Selim Khan's Bakhtrioni fortress, killing the nearby *kizilbash*: the location, Gatsqvetila ('Exterminated'), became infamous. Kartlians of every class took part in ethnic violence. For some reason, just one Iranian overlord, Mumtaz Quli Khan, at Aghjaqala, was spared. The shah put Murtaz Quli Khan in charge of Kakhetia. In May 1660 Vakhtang v had Duke Zaal's nephews killed, and sent Zaal's sons to the shah's court. They pleaded for forgiveness, but, with Shalva and Elizbar of Ksani, were tortured to death by Türkmen tribesmen. Tush, Pshav and Khevsur partisans fought on in the highlands; Teimuraz's grandson Erekle ventured over from Russian territory to encourage them. If Erekle had answered the shah's summons, he might have become king of Kakhetia. But he refused.

Vakhtang v, like Rostom, Simon and other Iranian-appointed kings of Kartli, overcame hostility with patience and patronage. He offered his daughter to the son of his sworn enemy, Duke Zaal of Ksani (the shah ordered a different match). Unlike Rostom, Vakhtang begot heirs – six sons and four daughters. His Islam was perfunctory: he made his own nephew Domenti Mukhranbatoni Catholicos in 1660. Tbilisi women wore the veil, but pork and wine were available, and the mosque was discreetly hidden in the citadel. Highly educated, Vakhtang v eschewed violence, and patronized foreign artists, missionaries and doctors, who were paid in wine or even slaves. Vakhtang's doctors Epifano and Rafaello di Parma had studied in Rome; Italian and Spanish singers, and Indian actors performed at court. The Catholics taught Greek, Italian and

Georgian to 25 students a year, sending Tbilisi's best to Rome for training. Capuchins frequented Queen Mariam's house and garden and built a public church.[6]

Obedient to the shah, on his accession, Vakhtang V divorced Ruadam Qaplanishvili-Orbeliani, who bore the future kings Archil and Giorgi, and married Mariam, Rostom's childless widow. (Ruadam lived another 20 years as a nun.) Vakhtang's children served mostly in Persian government or harems. Mariam stimulated Kartli's culture: she had the chronicles, *The Life of Kartli*, collated and edited. Vakhtang displeased the shah only when he helped his son Archil take the throne of Imeretia, thus contravening Iran's treaty with Turkey, and forcing the shah in 1664 to transfer Archil, once he had accepted Islam, to rule Kakhetia.

Archil, seemingly Vakhtang V's puppet, won acclaim by rebuilding Kakhetia's towns and deterring the Lezgi from rustling cattle. In the 1670s Archil introduced the Kakhetian and Kartlian courts to such novelties as theatrical performances of his imaginary dialogues between King Teimuraz and Rustaveli, re-enacted war victories, and carnival burlesques. First, Archil had to defend his crown from Erekle and the highlanders. With the help of King Vakhtang, Archil besieged Erekle in Torgha castle. Erekle's mother left the castle wearing male clothes in order to negotiate with Vakhtang: Erekle and his mother were then allowed to make their way back to Russian-held territory. But Erekle's supporters kept attacking, and Vakhtang and Archil narrowly escaped assassination. After one battle the pair built a tower of Tush skulls; on another occasion Vakhtang had conspirators' eyes gouged out. Vakhtang's rebellious nephews surrendered, with swords, rather than rope, hanging from their necks in submission, and were pardoned. Supervised by Vakhtang, Archil then moved the capital of Kakhetia far from the highlanders, from Gremi to Telavi; he married Ketevan, Teimuraz's granddaughter, to strengthen his tenure of Kakhetia's throne.

Shah Suleiman succeeded Abbas II in 1666. In 1674 he asked Teimuraz's grandson Erekle to end his stay in Russia and rule Kakhetia under Iranian supervision.[7] Erekle came, but would not convert: he was detained in Isfahan. Suleiman put Kakhetia under direct *kizilbash* rule. Archil then decided to seek Imeretia's throne: he asked his brother Luarsab, son-in-law of the duke of Racha, Imeretia's kingmaker, to get Ottoman consent and armed support for this venture. Archil's departure to western Georgia, again contravening Ottoman–Iranian agreements, outraged the shah, who held Vakhtang responsible for his son. Vakhtang had, in any case, become too powerful in both Kartli and Kakhetia; he had protested when Suleiman gave Vakhtang's daughter Anuka, a widow of Shah Abbas II, to a prince of Luristan. The shah built a wall around Tbilisi; feeling trapped, Vakhtang moved out of the city. Then Suleiman

summoned the king to Isfahan. In September 1675, Vakhtang died on the journey in Ganja: his second son Giorgi took Kartli's throne.

In order to rule Kartli, Giorgi XI had to elbow aside his younger brother Aleksandre, then governor of Isfahan. Giorgi converted to Islam as Shah-navaz II. He had to assuage Suleiman's anger at his brothers, Archil and Luarsab for their intrigues in Imeretia, not to mention the disputed remarriage of his aunt Anuka. Once in power, Giorgi crushed the Ossetians of Tskhinvali for withholding taxes. Then, like Kartli's previous Muslim kings, he pursued enlightened policies: he encouraged his relative, the young polymath Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani (son of the king's *mdivanbegi* – chief minister – and grandson of Zaal, duke of Aragvi), to compile the first Georgian dictionary. Like his father Vakhtang, Giorgi took Islam lightly and mitigated Iranian influences. In 1683 both his stepmother Mariam and his wife Tamar died. Kartli's aristocrats harassed Giorgi: Erekle Mukhranbatonishvili, virtually his foster-son, tried to kill him, and the dangerous Iese, duke of Aragvi, had to be strangled with a belt while relieving himself.

In 1687, seeking freedom from Iranian suzerainty, Giorgi made an advantageous second marriage with Khorashan, cousin of the duke of Racha. Through Father Giustino, Giorgi wrote to Pope Innocent XI on 29 April 1687: 'I rejoice at Christian kings' victories, but can do nothing because of obedience to Shah. Now all Georgia's army awaits your orders.' Archbishop Ekvtime added: 'Mouth of wisdom, science of theology, two-edged sword equal to Apostles, I kiss your sacred hand respectfully, prostrate at your feet, *Pasce oves meas, et ego dico tibi quia tu es Petrus*.'[8] (In reply the pope offered Giorgi XI remission of ten years and 400 days in purgatory for every charitable act.) Such sycophancy to Rome provoked Shah Suleiman into abandoning non-interference in Church matters; in 1688 he dismissed Catholicos-patriarch Nikoloz VI, ostensibly for disrespect to the king of Kartli, and appointed Ioane VII Diasamidze. Suleiman was even angrier at Giorgi's support for his brother Archil's claim to the throne of Imeretia: Archil was asking the Ottomans to liberate Kakhetia from Iranian rule and was mistreating his Iranophile subjects. In 1688 Shah Suleiman demanded hostages: first, Giorgi's brother Levan; then, his only son Bagrat. Giorgi feared that his nobles, even kinsmen, would betray him if he refused. He reluctantly sent his brother and son to prison in Herat. Giorgi fought battles against Kakhetians, in one of which Bishop Ioseb of Tbilisi was killed. Despite victories, Giorgi XI was deposed, and his pro-Iranian uncle Tamaz took over Tbilisi citadel. An Iranian army installed Erekle I, grandson of King Teimuraz, as king of Kartli. Accepting Islam, and renamed Nazar-Ali Khan, Erekle had to renounce Kakhetia, which the shah gave to Abbas Quli Khan of Ganja.

Giorgi XI found asylum in Racha (his brother Archil's refuge whenever forced off the throne of Imeretia). In 1691 Giorgi besieged Erekle in

Tbilisi, starting, with Archil's help, a desultory four-year civil war. The shah asked the Ottomans to hand Giorgi and Archil over to him. This kept Giorgi at bay, although the Ottomans would not cooperate, and many Kartlian nobles were willing to go over to Giorgi. After decades in Russia and Iran, Erekle found life in Kartli hard, and his nobles unfriendly and devious. Tbilisi lacked the splendour of the Kremlin and drove Erekle to drink. He felt he was rightful king of Kakhetia, not Kartli, and periodically prepared to reconquer that country. Extroverted, even foul-mouthed, Erekle got on best with commoners. He appointed new men – bishops, Catholicos, ministers – leaving them to govern, while he hunted or feasted. Erekle's war with Giorgi resultred in Iranian *kizilbash* being let loose on Kartli: peasants began fleeing to Kakhetia's highlands. In 1696 Giorgi, widowed again, returned: Shah Suleiman's death and Abbas Quli Khan's disgrace in Kakhetia transformed his prospects. The new shah Hosein invited Giorgi to Isfahan. With his brother Levan, Giorgi was entrusted with restoring imperial authority in Iran. Erekle was replaced by Giorgi as king of Kartli in 1703; he became king of Kakhetia, but *in absentia*: in reality he was Hosein's chief bodyguard. Giorgi, too, was king in name only: after he crushed the 1704 Afghan uprising, Hosein made him viceroy of Kandahar (where he kept two Capuchin friars in his entourage): he was murdered in 1709 by a Pashtun chieftain.[9] (While Giorgi fought in Afghanistan, Kartli was ruled by his nephew, the future king Vakhtang VI.) Erekle's career was similar: he never returned home, serving the shah until his death in 1710, and his son Davit II (Imam Quli Khan) ruled Kakhetia.

Western Georgia had a fleeting hope of order: in March 1657 Levan Dadiani, weeping over his son's corpse, struck his head with an iron cudgel and dropped dead. Mingrelia's population, oppressed by serfdom and slave-trading, prayed in churches and begged outside palaces richly furbished on Levan Dadiani's loot. Since Levan had murdered his legitimate sons, his nephew Liparit (son of the blinded Ioseb) became Dadiani. But Vamiq Liparitiani, son of Levan's second wife Darejan by Levan's uncle, asked King Aleksandre to make him Dadiani, and gave back Imeretia the border territory Levan had taken, as well as much of Levan Dadiani's treasury and several Mingrelian noblemen as hostages. Liparit accordingly asked Prince Kaikhosro of Guria, King Rostom of Kartli and the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe to keep him in power in Mingrelia, but Kartlian forces withdrew after an argument between generals which King Rostom, now too infirm to mount a horse, could not settle. At the battle of Bandza in June 1658 King Aleksandre restored Imeretia's dominance of western Georgia: Vamiq was confirmed as Dadiani (Teimuraz refused Aleksandre's offer of Mingrelia and decided to travel to Russia, instead). Liparit of Mingrelia and Kaikhosro of Guria fled to Istanbul, the former soon dying, the latter

briefly replaced by his malleable brother Demetre. The Paşa of Samtskhe restored Kaikhosro to Guria, but King Aleksandre and Demetre had him assassinated. Kaikhosro's sons fled to Samtskhe and plotted against their uncle.

Aleksandre recognized no heir: he had disowned Bagrat, his son by his first wife; Leonti, his son by Darejan, died; he had adopted his wife's nephew Luarsab, but this boy also died. In 1659, a year before Aleksandre died, he wrote to Tsar Aleksei, begging him to send Teimuraz's grandson Erekle (then known as Nikoloz) back from Moscow to Imeretia: 'I used to have Leonti, whom I thought my hope and fortress . . . now I have brought Iberia's and Imeretia's land under your realm's aegis . . . I have remained alone and sad in my old age'.[10] Tsar Aleksei eventually let Erekle go with a guard of 92 men to the Terek, but to await the call to Kakhetia, not Imeretia. Aleksandre could only recall from Guria Prince Bagrat, whom he had exiled as a bastard baby 40 years earlier, and make him heir.

Between 1650 and 1750, compared to western Georgia, Kakhetia and Kartli were civilized and stable. In between excesses of vindictive violence, the Persian shahs appreciated the Georgian contribution to their administration, their armed forces and harems, and gave their vassal kings considerable autonomy. Monarchs such as Rostom and Vakhtang V of Kartli were wise and ingenious. But Imeretia, Guria and Mingrelia were, for the Ottomans, insanitary backwaters useful only as a source of slaves and as a barrier against Iran. Western Georgia had no great urban, ecclesiastic or trading centres comparable with those of Kartli and Kakhetia. Its rulers were governed, if not by despair, then by concupiscence, vengefulness and idiocy. The story of western Georgia between the death of King Aleksandre and the accession of King Solomon I is a confusing vortex of internecine war, depositions and restorations, abduction, adultery, mutilation, murder and treachery. The only consolation for the student of Imeretian–Gurian–Mingrelian history is that it was even more terrible to endure in reality than to read about in retrospect.

On 28 February 1660 Aleksandre dined on dubious salmon; he died on 4 March. Imeretia now depended on Teimuraz's last surviving offspring, Darejan. It plunged into anarchy: in the next 66 years there would be 29 coups d'état. Queen Darejan did crown her stepson Bagrat, but, although they were both in their forties, she utterly cowed him. Three days after his father's funeral she made him marry her niece Ketevan; all decisions and documents in Imeretia bore first Darejan's name ('queen of queens, daughter of the King of Kakhetia'), and second Bagrat's. Noblemen, like Papuna, duke of Racha, begged Bagrat to seek Turkish help to neutralize his stepmother; others, like the new Catholicos Simon I and an ambassador to Russia, backed Darejan. By July Darejan took sole charge: she made Bagrat IV divorce Ketevan and offered herself as his bride.

When Bagrat recoiled from this incestuous proposal, she had him blinded. (Bagrat bore his misfortune bravely: for the rest of his life he wore a kerchief over his oozing sockets, and joked at the dinner table that he would never offend anyone else, since he could not see to ward off any assassin.)[11]

Darejan then married a self-proclaimed Bagratid, Vakhtang Chuchuniashvili, known to the populace as Chuchunia ('pipsqueak'); the couple proclaimed themselves king and queen. King Teimuraz, stunned by Darejan's vices, refused to leave Skanda palace, let alone claim the throne of Imeretia; he sent envoys to his grandson Erekle and the Russian *voevoda* on the Terek to inform them of this latest *coup d'état*. Imeretia's nobility was unanimously outraged: lower Imeretians invited Vamiq from Mingrelia, upper Imeretians, King Vakhtang v from Kartli to overthrow the obnoxious pair. Vamiq took Darejan and Chuchunia prisoner, blinding the latter, and then usurped the Imeretian throne. Darejan appealed to King Vakhtang v of Kartli for help, offering her now divorced niece Ketevan for Vakhtang's son Archil, and her throne to Vakhtang himself. Vakhtang v invaded upper Imeretia: he and Vamiq agreed to divide Imeretia between Mingrelia and Kartli. At first the two invaders were allies, Vamiq betrothing his daughter to Vakhtang v's son Archil. Then Vamiq gave preference to a local son-in-law, Prince Bezhan Ghoghoberidze, and took all Kutaisi's gold and silver, twelve wagonloads, back to Zugdidi, together with the captive Queen Darejan.

Vakhtang responded by recruiting Demetre Gurieli and the upper Imeretian nobility to kill Bezhan Ghoghoberidze and let Vakhtang into Kutaisi. Vamiq avoided battle, withdrawing to Mingrelia. Vakhtang first took several castles, including Skanda where Teimuraz was waiting, then invaded Mingrelia, captured Zugdidi, Vamiq's family and treasury, and installed a more amenable Dadiani, Levan II's nephew Shamadavle, who took the name Levan III. Vakhtang married Levan III to his beautiful and passionate niece Tamar, an eventually disastrous match. (When Jean Chardin dined with Tamar in 1667, she was estranged from Levan III, but proved as rapacious and lecherous as her husband: when she touched Chardin he did not know whether he was being seduced or robbed.) Vamiq fled to lawless Svanetia, but Vakhtang hired men of Lechkhumi to kill him there. In Zugdidi, Vakhtang v met Prince Shervashidze of Abkhazia, who swore allegiance, as did Demetre Gurieli. Vakhtang declared his eldest son Archil King of Imeretia, but put the northeast of the country under one of his own generals. He left for Tbilisi, taking two unhappy ex-kings, Teimuraz and the blind Bagrat IV.

In 1661 Georgia was thus reunited (but for Kakhetia, controlled by Iranian garrisons and Murtaz Quli Khan). Unfortunately, the Ottoman–Iranian treaty, allocating western Georgia to Turkey and eastern Georgia

to Iran, forbade unification, particularly when the king of Kartli invaded Imeretia to crown his son king. The sultan mobilized the Paşas of Akhaltsikhe, Erzerum and Kars and protested to the shah. When in 1663 Archil was deposed and sent to Iran for confirmation as king of Kakhetia, he asserted his claim to Imeretia by marrying Ketevan, Teimuraz's granddaughter whom Darejan had made Bagrat IV divorce. (Vakhtang V paid 20,000 silver kurush to ransom Ketevan who, like Darejan and Chuchunia, had become a hostage of the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. Darejan remained a prisoner, and her pleas, via her nephew Erekle and the shah of Persia, to the tsar of Russia remained unanswered.)

After the shah ousted Archil from Kakhetia in favour of Erekle, Archil found his alternative kingdom, Imeretia, a poisoned chalice: Vakhtang V's death in Iran in 1675 left Archil without support. Archil intermittently held the throne in 1678–9, 1690–91, 1695–6 and 1698, before abandoning Kutaisi for Russia. For decades western Georgia's anarchy had been a black comedy. After bribing the Ottomans, Demetre Gurieli controlled both Imeretia and Mingrelia, calling himself for three months king of all western Georgia. But when the Turkish soldiers left in 1663, Imeretia reverted to the blind Bagrat IV, whom King Vakhtang V released from Kartli. Demetre of Guria was expelled. Bagrat was immediately attacked by Levan III Dadiani, who was captured by the Imeretians. The chaos drove even Italian missionaries to evacuate Imeretia.

A complicated wife swap ensued. King Bagrat, after losing Ketevan, had married Vakhtang V's daughter Tatia; he now discarded her and, Catholicos Simon granting two divorces, took her more beautiful sister, Levan's wife Tamar. In 1670 Chardin dined with Tamar in Kutaisi, finding her even more lubricious, and shocked by her flagrant affair with the bishop of Gelati. This, too, Bagrat IV bore with fortitude, joking to Chardin that in Imeretia every bishop had nine wives, 'not counting those of his neighbours'. (Lamberti reports that Mingrelian bishops commonly had four wives.) In exchange for Tamar, Levan took Bagrat's sister Tinatin, who was divorced from a Gurian nobleman. Levan was still in love with Tamar, but a third admirer, Giorgi, the new Gurieli, 'querulous, godless, bloodthirsty, a merciless slave-trader', was determined to have her. Giorgi Gurieli (with an eye on Imeretia's throne) bribed the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe extravagantly, but in vain, to capture both Bagrat and Tamar.

Imeretia's people suffered worse than ever: noblemen, the Catholicos, the royal court were all wholesale slave-traders. (Jean Chardin, seeing the resigned faces of victims awaiting shipping, concluded that slavery in Turkey, where a pretty face or active mind might bring promotion or emancipation, was preferable to serfdom in Mingrelia.) In 1666 Bagrat's chamberlain Sekhnia Chkheidze overthrew the king and installed an Ottoman garrison. The next year the *mouravi* of Kutaisi slaughtered the garrison

and freed Bagrat. In 1668 Aslan Paşa (an ethnic Georgian) of Akhaltsikhe invaded and re-garrisoned Kutaisi castle: Bagrat IV fled to Lechkhumi, while janissaries looted, desecrated, burned and enslaved Imeretia. Bagrat IV's fiendish stepmother Darejan and her husband Chuchunia swiftly became Turcophile, paying Aslan Paşa 20,000 kurush for freedom and Imeretia's throne.

Darejan literally adopted her vizier Khosia Lashkhishvili by the traditional gesture of letting him bite her breast and thus become her foster-son. But he, like Imeretia's other notables, was so aghast at the queen's aberrations that in 1668, when she was at a nobleman's house on state business, he helped tie her up, and bribed the janissaries to let him spear her to death in the castle gateway (Chuchunia was then beheaded). As King Teimuraz's daughter, however, Darejan 'the Deceitful' received a royal funeral at Gelati. The same Imeretians then caught, blinded and expelled Demetre Gurieli, and restored Bagrat IV. (Aslan Paşa made Giorgi, Kaikhosro's son, Gurieli.)

Bagrat IV sent embassies in 1667 and 1668 to Moscow to plead for protection, but in vain: the tsar, who had an envoy from Queen Darejan, too, was bewildered by the chaos in Imeretia; Erekle, now established at the Russian court, as the rightful heir to both Imeretia's and Kakhetia's thrones, wanted to isolate Bagrat. Erekle accused the Imeretian ambassadors of complicity in his aunt Darejan's murder, and the Imeretian mission was imprisoned in a remote Russian monastery. Over the next decade Bagrat IV, with no allies, fended off attacks from Mingrelia, Guria and his own disloyal subjects, sometimes fleeing to the mountains, sometimes gaining the upper hand, either by armed force, or a bribe to the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. At one point Bagrat had to hand over his illegitimate son Aleksandre as a hostage, but in 1674 Bagrat captured Kutaisi citadel and exchanged it with Aslan Paşa for Aleksandre. Imeretia's nobility, especially those driven into exile by Darejan, let the Ottomans garrison Kutaisi for a century.

The Ottomans despised the ill-dressed and ill-behaved Imeretians so much that they called the country and its capital Başacık ('Bare-headed'). Only laxity prevented the Ottomans from making Imeretia a Muslim province like Samtskhe. Guria and Mingrelia were just as chaotic: in 1672, for example, Giorgi Gurieli recruited Ottomans to help pillage Mingrelia, making the peasants refugees, half-dead with exhaustion and starvation, snatching babies to export to Turkey. In 1674 the missionary Father Zampi reported: 'Mingrelia no longer exists, nobody has livestock, nobody can exist without fear.'[12] Guria was in turn ravaged by Bagrat's forces; then Bagrat needed Guria as an ally and married Giorgi Gurieli to Darejan, daughter of his queen, Tamar.

When in 1678 Archil retook the Imeretian throne, Bagrat IV aban-

doned Tamar and fled to Guria. Archil captured Tamar in Skanda castle and restored her to her first husband, Levan III Dadiani. In August 1679, however, Bagrat, helped by the Paşa of Erzurum and his Gurian son-in-law, deposed Archil, attacked Levan Dadiani, and took Tamar back to Kutaisi. Archil fled to Racha: for the first time Racha was pillaged by the Ottomans. In 1681 Bagrat died, and Giorgi Gurieli seized Imeretia. Giorgi divorced his child-bride Darejan and illegally married his mother-in-law, the widowed Tamar.[13]

Bagrat's illegitimate son Aleksandre was a prisoner of King Giorgi XI of Kartli. In 1683, at the request of Imeretia's nobility, who abhorred the incestuous Giorgi Gurieli, the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe persuaded Giorgi XI to release Aleksandre, who then became King Aleksandre IV of Imeretia. Giorgi Gurieli returned home without Tamar, who went to Mingrelia, where she had once been the ruler's wife, to assemble an army. The last of Imeretia's *femmes fatales*, she died before the year ended. Aleksandre IV resembled his predecessors: although generous and brave, he was 'always mistrustful and a seller of slaves'; he associated with Svimon Chkheidze, archpriest of Kutaisi, 'an impious fornicator, murderer and slave-trader'.

To win support in Imeretia, Aleksandre IV tied himself to the Abashidzes, Imeretia's richest lords: he married his half-sister Darejan (formerly Giorgi Gurieli's wife) to Paata Abashidze. Many, notably Shoshita, duke of Racha, still disliked the new king and conspired with the Gurians to overthrow him. War broke out in 1684: Aleksandre won the battle of Rokiti, but his Abashidze in-laws perished, as did his enemies. Aleksandre profited from ransoming Gurian and Mingrelian prisoners, but still felt insecure. He contacted Kartli and sought King Giorgi XI's daughter, and then his niece, as brides. He was refused, blaming Shoshita. Enraged, Aleksandre sent an army to ravage Racha. Racha called on King Giorgi; Imeretia was saved only when the shah decided in 1688 to replace Giorgi XI with Teimuraz's grandson Erekle. Despite Aleksandre's protests, the duke of Racha harboured the deposed Giorgi. Aleksandre organized a second invasion of Racha. Both the duke and his guest the ex-king of Kartli fled to a remote mountain village.

Eventually, the duke of Racha reconquered his lands, and Giorgi XI invited his brother Archil to leave Russia and seize Imeretia. The tsar refused Archil the 15,000 men he needed to rid Imeretia of his enemies, but gave him 6,500 roubles for the journey. Archil was greeted as he came over the mountains by the duke of Racha and some Imeretian noblemen. Aleksandre IV had his in-laws and the archpriest of Kutaisi, as well as Ottoman soldiers, to resist Archil; the duke of Racha could not rely even on his own men. The would-be King Archil and the ex-King Giorgi both hid in Mingrelia and Abkhazia, from where Archil appealed to the Ottoman sultan. Meanwhile Aleksandre offered Mingrelia's ruler, Giorgi

Liparitiani, all Lechkhumi region if he would switch sides and banish Archil. Archil was offered safe conduct back to Russia if he forswore his claims to the throne. Archil meekly retraced his path through Racha and over the Caucasus. But from Ossetia Archil wrote to the sultan of Turkey, promising 20 years' unpaid tax if he received the Imeretian throne. Ex-king Giorgi became a guest of Mamia Gurieli. But, suspected of usurping Mamia's position, he had to flee to Turkey, where he waited for Imeretia to fall into friendlier hands.

Pondering regime change, the Ottomans tried to sound out Imeretia's nobility: Aleksandre IV ordered the sultan's envoy to be killed. The envoy escaped to Akhaltsikhe, where he advised ex-King Giorgi: 'Have seals made for all Imeretia's noblemen and put Archil on the throne.' Giorgi had a royal seal made and got a quorum of Imeretians to petition the sultan, who invested Archil with sword and gown. In August 1690 the Paşa of Erzerum's army enthroned Archil. Aleksandre IV went to stay with King Erekle in Tbilisi.

Again, as soon as Turkish soldiers left and winter prevented them from returning, Imeretia's nobles turned on their new king, this time with Mingrelian help. They resented Archil's attempts to return stolen land to its original owners. Without asking Erekle or the shah, Aleksandre IV rushed back to Imeretia. On 20 December 1690 near Kutaisi, at the battle of Godogani, Aleksandre's allies switched to Archil, and Aleksandre was defeated. Archil's hopes, however, soon faded. At King Erekle's bidding, the shah asked the sultan to restore Aleksandre. The sultan first arrested ex-King Giorgi in Akhaltsikhe; his brother Archil then besieged Kutaisi's Ottoman garrison, who ended up 'boiling and eating their sandals'. Archil was let down by the Mingrelians, who demanded Lechkhumi in exchange for support; when Archil procrastinated, the Mingrelians freed the Ottoman garrison, who then demolished Kutaisi cathedral. Turkish soldiers brought back Aleksandre; Archil left Kutaisi yet again. In Ossetia, on his way to Russia, he was intercepted by a Circassian chieftain who had been bribed to deliver Archil to the shah: only after hand-to-hand fighting and a Lezgi nobleman's intervention did Archil escape back to Kartli. Aleksandre IV tightened his grip on Imeretia by divorcing the mother of his two children (Simon and Giorgi) and marrying Tamar, the ten-year-old daughter of Imeretia's magnate, Giorgi Abashidze.

Four kings now fought to rule Kartli. Ex-King Giorgi, freed from Akhaltsikhe by sympathetic locals, reached Kartli, where he forced Erekle to barricade himself in Tbilisi citadel. Aleksandre arrived with an Imeretian army ostensibly to back Erekle, but was intercepted by Archil at Tashiskari, and had to abandon loot and prisoners for the safety of Skanda castle. Aleksandre incurred much hatred by his ruthless slave-trading and by this Kartlian campaign, when he had destroyed a peaceful village. Now, in

1694, his adolescent wife Tamar turned against him and begged her father, Giorgi Abashidze, to hand Aleksandre over to Giorgi. Imeretia's Catholicos and nobility eagerly joined the Abashidze conspiracy, took Aleksandre IV prisoner and sent him to Ruisi where, on Giorgi XI's orders, he was strangled and buried in the church.

In 1695 Archil ruled Imeretia for the fourth time. The widowed Tamar Abashidze, however, offered herself to ex-King Giorgi XI if he would take the throne instead. Loyal to his brother Archil, Giorgi refused, and left for Isfahan. Giorgi Abashidze then proposed Tamar to Archil, promising to support Archil's royal claims. Archil also refused. Spurned, Giorgi Abashidze, with Mingrelian connivance, found another Giorgi, allegedly a Bagratid, but widely known as Gochia ('piglet'). Giorgi Abashidze married his daughter to Gochia, and enthroned the pair in 1696. Again, Archil escaped to Ossetia. Tamar and her 'crippled peasant' Gochia were a royal couple even less credible than Darejan and her Chuchunia: Giorgi Abashidze held actual power, even in Mingrelia and Guria. In 1698 Tamar herself was sickened by the farce: Gochia was driven out.

In 1697 Archil was leaving the high Caucasus for Russia with his nephew (the future king Vakhtang VI). Abashidze asked him to return: Archil at first refused both the crown and Tamar Abashidze. But after a winter in the mountains, he gave in to his retinue's insistence. He frankly detested the 'bestial, depraved, false, slave-trading' Imeretian nobility and peasantry, yet returned to Kutaisi (but jilted Tamar). His fifth reign lasted six months, before the sultan ordered him to make way for Aleksandre IV's son Simon. Imeretia's nobility showed Archil no loyalty. In 1699, as soon as the snow melted, Archil went to Russia, this time for good. In his sporadic reigns, Archil did some good: he invited the Polish Jesuit Jan Gostkowski to Kutaisi. Gostkowski, whom King Jan Sobieski III, hoping to find allies against the Turks, had sent as an envoy to Vakhtang V of Kartli, spent nearly 50 years in Kutaisi, fighting slave-trading and plague (from which he died in 1738).[14]

Simon was brought from Kartli to Kutaisi. Irrepressible, Giorgi Abashidze immediately procured a divorce for his other daughter Anika and made her Simon's queen. Just as ruthlessly, Tamar Abashidze made Giorgi Liparitiani of Mingrelia divorce his wife, the mother of seven children, and marry her. Tamar, married three times before she was 20, was, without irony, now called 'Queen of Imeretia and Mingrelia'. (Her father Giorgi had also married a third time.) King Simon, horrified by his kingdom's morals and the conflicts between Anika, his wife, and her sister Tamar, fled to Kartli. But there was no escape from the Imeretian vortex. Simon was lured back to Imeretia by Mamia Gurieli and the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe; he then divorced Anika Abashidze and married a sister of Mamia. Giorgi Abashidze and Giorgi Liparitiani took this divorce as an insult; they

conspired with Mamia, promising to make him king of Imeretia. In 1701 Abashidze's hitmen lurked outside King Simon's bedroom and shot him dead as he went to the privy.

15
The Eighteenth Century

✠

The Russian Count turned back with his army
– it did nothing for his name –
He gave everyone the same response:
'I'm going where I came from.'
Besiki Gabashvili, 'On the Battle of Aspindza'

For Georgia the eighteenth century's peaks – prospective unification and independence – were high, and the troughs – devastation by Ottomans and Iranians – were deep, while the century ended with Bagratid rule extinguished by the Russian empire.

Kartli began the century with absent kings: Giorgi XI murdered in 1709, leading Iranian forces in Afghanistan; his nephew King Kaikhosro dying on the same front in 1711. Kartli was governed from 1703 by Vakhtang, Kaikhosro's older brother, King Vakhtang VI from 1711. Vakhtang ruled intermittently: his younger brother Simon was regent for 1711–12. Vakhtang was detained in Iran in 1714, being replaced by another younger brother Iese (who reverted to Christianity in 1716) and then by his son Bakar, until Vakhtang accepted Islam in 1719.

Youthful (he was born in 1675) and dependent on Shah Hosein, Vakhtang nevertheless transformed Kartli. Between 1704 and 1708 he compiled a law code, the *dasturlamali*,[1] which ranked citizens by blood price: killing a peasant incurred a penalty of 12 tumans; a mid-ranking merchant or low-ranking nobleman, 48; a high-ranking merchant or mid-ranking nobleman, 96; the price doubling with rank, with a senior prince worth 1536 tumans. Serfdom became laxer: a refugee squatting on crown land won tenure after six years. Fewer oppressed peasants now fled to Dagestan, or converted to Islam to avoid taxation. *Mqrelebi* (gatherers) encouraged or compelled refugee peasants to return to their original lands: repatriates had a year's tax exemption. Foreigners, notably the Jesuit orientalist Father Tadeusz Krusiński, who acted as royal secretary, assisted Vakhtang VI.

Vakhtang centralized royal power: towns became crown lands; the mint (coins still bore Persian letters) became a crown monopoly. Industries like silk production and dyeing became monopolies of Vakhtang and his Circassian queen Rusudan. Agriculture was revived by renovating irrigation systems, sowing much more grain – wheat, barley and oats – and flax in the valleys: 2,621 peasant households in Kartli produced in one year nearly 1,000 tonnes of grain. Pigs, an animal safe from Dagestan's Muslim raiders, now grazed Tusheti's forests. Viticulture expanded so much that hired labour was imported. Vakhtang planted sweet-smelling hyacinths which invaded wasteland around Tbilisi.[2] Tbilisi recovered its urban trade: in the mid-1700s it had 200 shops, protected by taxes on competing imports. Customs tolls financed roads and caravanserais for foreign traders. Merchants formed *psonebi* (cooperatives) with branches in Astrakhan and Tabriz. Copper-mines (worked by Greek immigrants) and iron foundries flourished

Some prosperity spread to Kakhetia, but King Davit II (Imam Quli Khan), the regent when King Erekle was in Iran, could not pacify his country, troubled by Dagestan raiders, despite Davit's marriage to Yatar, daughter of Dagestan's Shamkhal. Kakhetia's towns, even Telavi, were merely fortified villages, but Kartli's and Kakhetia's policies and economies began to converge.

Shah Hosein, grateful to Georgian kings serving on the Afghan front, tolerated Vakhtang's support of Orthodoxy. In 1705 Vakhtang summoned a synod, and had his brother appointed Catholicos Domenti III. (Domenti returned from Russia holding vehemently modern views: he remained Catholicos until 1741, but the Turks imprisoned him from 1725 to 1737, because 'your brother Vakhtang has gone astray', confirming him, nevertheless, in post in 1724.) The Church was integrated with the crown. Next, Vakhtang created a loyal *mtsvelta jari* (guards corps): in 1707 this force subdued the Ossetians, reclaiming Georgia's northern borders.

In 1709 the Afghan warlord Mir-Wais killed Vakhtang's uncle King Giorgi XI: Kartli was unaffected. Kings Erekle and Kaikhosro (the shah's viceroy in Kartli) and 2,000 Georgian soldiers helped Shah Hosein eliminate Mir-Wais and govern cities like Tabriz and Barda. Vakhtang VI persuaded the Iranians to cede Tbilisi's citadel to Georgians and to stop importing Georgian slaves.

Kartli became more European. Aleksandre Bagration, son of exiled King Archil, was Peter the Great's boon companion (Aleksandre's short-lived child bride was Feodosia Miloslavskaia, cousin of the Empress Sofia). In 1688 Aleksandre toured Holland, France and England with Peter. In Amsterdam Peter ordered type for a new civic Cyrillic script; Aleksandre commissioned from Nicolaas Witsen, the world's leading typographer, fonts for all three Georgian alphabets. Witsen consulted a Hungarian–

Wallachian printer, Miklós Misztódfalusi, and by 1689 fonts were cast.[3] But Aleksandre's capture by the Swedes delayed their arrival by ten years: only in 1703 was a Georgian book, *The Psalms of David*, printed in Moscow, far finer than the Vatican's Georgian primers of the 1620s. By 1730 the Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg had Georgian type, and printed more books. Vakhtang VI set up a press in Tbilisi. Ironically, printing in Wallachia had been fostered by a Georgian immigrant, Antim the Iberian (a Turkish slave bought by the patriarch of Jerusalem and taught languages and typography); by 1705 Antim was bishop of Rimnik and sent his pupil Misztódfalusi ('Mikeil the Hungaro-Wallachian' to Georgians) to Tbilisi. In 1709 the Gospels were printed in a building provided by Vakhtang; over next twelve years, despite clerical hostility, 21 books were printed, including Vakhtang VI's edition of Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin*.[4]

Progress faltered in 1714 when Shah Hosein summoned King Vakhtang VI to Kirman, annulled his subsidy, dismissed his servants and detained him for refusing Islam. While his brother and son ruled, Vakhtang sent his maternal uncle, the scholar and writer Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, to Europe. Sulkhan-Saba, as a Catholic monk, could cross Ottoman territory in 1714 with letters for Pope Clement XI and King Louis XIV of France, pleading for pressure on the shah to release King Vakhtang, hinting that the Georgian Church might accept the pope's authority (a proposition which Catholicos Domenti supported).[5] (In 1708, the adventuress Marie Petit, who declared herself 'head of mission' when her lover, Jean-Baptiste Fabre, French ambassador to Persia, was poisoned in Erevan, apparently took a letter to Louis XIV from Vakhtang VI, who repatriated her when the new ambassador, Jean-Victor Michel, arrived.[6]) Kartlian nobles opposed this venture, rightly fearing Iranian wrath. Even before the shah detained Vakhtang VI, some nobles preferred Islam to Roman Catholicism. Domenti himself had gone to Isfahan, offering to unfrock himself, marry and convert to Islam (probably hoping to seize the throne: his father, Prince Levan, apparently had him thrashed for apostasy).[7] In 1712 Vakhtang's brother Simon confined Domenti as a 'madman'.

In 1714 Shah Hosein appointed Iese, now Ali Quli Khan, to govern Kartli: though feared as 'an enemy and a devil' as his brother Vakhtang declared, Iese observed Islam only in polygamy and by reprimanding the Tbilisi garrison for burning Qu'rans (Iranian investigators were replaced by Georgians, who punished nobody). Iese sought popularity by becoming Orthodox, but Kartlians lobbied Hosein, asking for Vakhtang's son Bakar who, although Iese tried to imprison him, became regent in 1714.

Sulkhan-Saba's diplomacy fared no better than his predecessors'. The pope could not make the shah release Vakhtang; King Louis XIV had just welcomed the shah's son and concluded lucrative trade agreements. Worse, shortly after Sulkhan-Saba arrived, the pious Louis XIV died; Louis

XV had no interest in rescuing a faraway Christian kingdom. Sulkhan-Saba returned empty-handed: in 1716 Vakhtang VI accepted Islam, but Shah Hosein delayed replacing Bakar, who, as Shah Navaz Khan, gave no trouble. Kartli was, however, plagued by insurgents loyal to the ousted Iese, and Dagestanis were now raiding Iranian territory. In 1719 Shah Hosein released Vakhtang VI to restore order, provided that he would later serve in Afghanistan.

Iranian, Kartlian and Kakhetian interests temporarily coincided. Vakhtang VI enjoyed popular adulation, and Iranian confidence. Kakhetia was now ruled by the diplomatic Teimuraz II, brother of Davit (Imam Quli Khan), for, when his father Erekle was killed, Davit was detained in Iran from 1709 to 1715. With Kartlian and Iranian forces, King Teimuraz II of Kakhetia and the bishop of Alaverdi fought the Dagestani Lezgi. When Davit returned to Kakhetia, Vakhtang VI led a joint Kartli–Kakhetian attack on Dagestan. But Teimuraz II was no warrior; he was a diplomat and poet: his sensitivity imbues a poem *On the Death of a Nanny-Goat that Suckled a Fawn* which he wrote to console his young heir Erekle. The Kartli–Kakhetia alliance faltered: Davit did not back the initial attack, and their ally the khan of Shirvan was routed and killed; then Davit began sheltering dissident Kartlians like Shanshe, duke of Ksani.

Vakhtang VI consolidated his position: in 1721, supported by Muslim khans of Erevan and Karabagh, he became commander-in-chief of all north Iranian forces. He subdued the Dagestanis, and took their base area of Belakani. Vakhtang won the trust of both Iran and its vassal khanates, and of the Christian Armenians, whose Catholicos Esai Jalalian hoped that Vakhtang could resurrect the Armenian kingdom.

But Vakhtang's escalating power soured Iran's trust. The shah feared Vakhtang might incorporate Kakhetia into Kartli; he ordered him to relinquish his conquests. Vakhtang refused. He was gambling on Russia invading the western coast of the Caspian. Despite the disappointments of earlier Kakhetian gambles on Russia, he considered Tsar Peter the Great a mightier ally. In 1719 Volynsky, Russian ambassador to Iran, negotiated with Vakhtang's Persian admirers, speculating that Georgians and Armenians, outside and inside Iran, would support Russia's advance. Volynsky's instructions were 'to incline Vakhtang and other Christians for the profit of Russia'. Russia, like Vakhtang, sensed that the Safavid dynasty was degenerating. Vakhtang summoned a *darbazi* which assented to a covert military expedition to meet the Russian army on the Caspian coast. Kartli's nobles required Russia to dispatch 5,000 soldiers to Tbilisi as a guarantee of good faith. In November 1721 Vakhtang wrote to Peter the Great, accepting Volynsky as supreme commander. He also consulted Armenian princes and clergy about forming an Armenian army and sent military experts to Catholicos Jalalian. Lezgi raiders robbing Russian merchants in Shemakha

were a pretext to advance eastwards; attacking Iran could be disguised as an anti-Lezgi raid.

The shah was still embroiled in war in Afghanistan: Vakhtang's brother Rostom was killed there, while Vakhtang's son Bakar was appointed commander of the shah's guard, but was forbidden by Vakhtang to accept the post. When Afghans took Isfahan the shah was doomed. In summer 1722 Tsar Peter announced his imminent advance. The Paşa of Erzurum warned Vakhtang that Turkey was about to deal Iran a death blow and proposed an alliance, the bait being to make Vakhtang king of all Georgia. Vakhtang refused, and informed Peter the Great. Ironically, the besieged Shah Hosein and his son Tahmasp asked Vakhtang to lead all Iranian troops in Azerbaijan. Between August and November 1722 Vakhtang moved 30,000 men to Ganja, letting the Iranians believe that he was supporting them, not the Russians.

The gamble failed disastrously. Peter the Great's army reached Derbent, but did not rendezvous with Vakhtang. Poor logistics, epidemics among the troops and fear of provoking war with Turkey all disconcerted Peter: he retreated to Astrakhan. Vakhtang was promised by Second Lieutenant Tolstoi that the campaign would resume next spring, but when Peter the Great broke Tolstoi's promise of Russian reinforcements in Kartli, lest the Paşa of Erzurum protest, Vakhtang knew he was left in the lurch. Vakhtang's deviousness infuriated Hosein's successor, Tahmasp II; the Turks, equally angry at his Russian alliance, hovered on Kartli's borders. The new king of Kakhetia, Konstantine II (Mahmud Quli Khan), undertook to kill Vakhtang for Tahmasp, and was promised the throne of Kartli in return. The khans of Erevan and Ganja joined in. Tbilisi citadel was garrisoned by Iranians, Lezgi mercenaries and some Kartlian nobles. After three months' fighting, Vakhtang lost the decisive battle of Zedavela (near Gori). The poet Davit Guramishvili fought as a boy and recalled:

> Woe is that day! The Ottomans shed much innocent blood,
> Wherever they met a workman or a simple peasant, they cut off their heads;
> The basket needs a head, they said, they threw them into many wickerwork carts,
> The bodies had no burial, foxes and wild goats gnawed at them.

In spring 1723 Konstantine used Iranian soldiers to capture Tbilisi; Vakhtang fled to Tskhinvali. The Paşa of Erzurum told Vakhtang to submit to the sultan, if he wanted to be king of Kartli: the *darbazi* advised capitulation. Second Lieutenant Tolstoi still insisted that Tsar Peter was coming; Vakhtang merely pretended to accept the sultan's terms.[8] On 12 June an

Ottoman army bloodlessly took Tbilisi from Konstantine. Vakhtang bribed the Ottoman commander Ibrahim Paşa to disarm Konstantine and install Vakhtang's son Bakar as Kartli's governor. For a few weeks Bakar and Konstantine both resisted the Ottomans, but soon fled, Konstantine eventually converting to Islam and becoming Ottoman vassal king of Kakhetia (he was murdered in Akhaltsikhe in 1732 for consorting with the Iranians, and replaced by his Christian brother Teimuraz II).

When the Ottomans made Peter abandon the Caspian coast, Russia washed its hands of Georgia. Despite offering twelve mule-loads of jewellery, and his son Bakar and brother Iese as hostages, Vakhtang had to abdicate: Iese was enthroned as a Turkish puppet. Bakar fought a futile guerrilla campaign in Trialeti, killing 500 Ottomans. In July 1724 a Russo-Turkish treaty was signed in Istanbul. Turkey undertook to leave Iran intact, and to cede the Caspian coast to Peter. Russia acknowledged Turkish sovereignty over all Georgia, Armenia and northwest Iran. Some nobles urged Vakhtang to fight, like King Simon I, to death or capture; Duke Shanshe of Ksani wanted Bakar to start an insurgency. That summer, Vakhtang VI, his family and 1,200 men, including distinguished scholars and soldiers, reached Astrakhan. After spurning kingdoms from Turkey and Iran, Vakhtang humbly accepted Russia's betrayal and asylum. Vakhtang would spend a decade as a poet and scholar, consoled that in Russia a critical mass of Georgians, many with a European education, could one day revive their country.

The Turks compiled in 1728 a *büyük defter* ('Great Register'), an inventory of Kartli's taxable landowners to turn Georgia into an Ottoman dependency. Under Ishak Paşa everyone, from slaves to landowners, was taxed, and a tariff was set for everything saleable or productive: coffee beans, silk, nightingales, dried fish, beehives, bridges. In 1728 Kartli brought in some 30 million akçe (about 120 tonnes of silver), although the maintenance of Ottoman soldiers and bureaucrats absorbed most of the revenue.[9] Those who defied Turkey, like Catholicos Domenti, were lucky merely to be imprisoned. Deserted by its nobility, the country fell into apathy and despair. As Vakhtang put it, the country had escaped the claws of the lynx, only to fall into the claws of the tiger.

King Archil's departure for Russia and King Simon's murder in 1701 tightened Turkey's grip on western Georgia. For a year Mamia III (the 'Black' or 'Great') Gurieli ruled Imeretia, but Giorgi Abashidze and his daughter Tamar controlled Imeretia's revenues and nobility. To meet his expenses, Mamia had to sell his own Gurian subjects into slavery: he abdicated and returned to Guria. Abashidze took power as Giorgi VI (Aleksandre IV's sister was Abashidze's aunt, making him half a Bagratid) and then helped Mingrelia recover territory lost to Abkhazia. King Erekle of Kartli threatened Abashidze with war, but Abashidze warned off Erekle's ministers.

Even more than Vakhtang VI's Kartli, western Georgia staked everything on Tsar Peter. Peter had built a navy on the River Don and captured the port of Azov: Russia was now only days away from Mingrelia; the Russian fleet, Imeretians hoped, would bring King Archil's son, still a prisoner of war in Sweden. Rumours circulated of a joint British-Russian advance on Istanbul, and of a Volga–Don canal giving all Peter's ships access to the Black Sea. Peter's envoy in Istanbul, Second Lieutenant Tolstoi promised to attack Turkish garrisons in Mingrelian ports. Imeretia now hoped to become a Russian protectorate. Western Georgia began withholding tribute from the Ottomans; the Abkhaz began attacking Turkish traders.

The Turks quickly quashed this disobedience, and pre-empted Russian intervention. They promised Imeretia to Giorgi, the young brother of the murdered King Simon; King Erekle of Kartli obligingly sent Giorgi to be educated by the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. In summer 1703 Ottoman soldiers crossed the Çoruh, and fortified Batumi; another army went over the mountains towards Kutaisi; a fleet then landed troops in Mingrelia and invaded Imeretia, too.[10] (The Abkhaz switched sides, preferring to loot with the Turks.) Western Georgia's other rulers blocked roads and evacuated civilians, while the Turks took castle after castle. Mingrelia held out; Guria and Imeretia, where many nobles opened the roads to the Ottomans, collapsed. (The Ottomans never intended, however, to annex western Georgia: if they did, they could not enslave new Ottoman subjects, and their last source of slaves would be Circassia and Abkhazia.)

A second Ottoman army was ready, when western Georgia was saved by unpaid troops mutinying: Mustafa II was overthrown. The new sultan, Ahmed III, refused to fund a Caucasian war. The new vizier, Ahmed Paşa, an ethnic Georgian, offered Giorgi Abashidze a truce if he demolished Shorapani castle near the Kartlian border, gave hostages and tribute, and recognized Giorgi VII as king of Imeretia. Abashidze treacherously massacred the retreating Turks: very few got back to Akhaltsikhe, the Paşa himself was wounded. The Ukrainian Cossack leader Mazeppa heard of this underhand victory and on 3 August 1703 informed Russia. But the Turks held the coast, and all western Georgia's castles. The devastation, and Abashidze's 'feckless, money-grabbing, penny-pinching' character doomed him in his subjects' eyes, even if Vakhtang VI, Kartli's new king, still backed him.

In 1703 the Turks' Imeretian candidate, Giorgi VII, was confined, destitute, in Kutaisi castle, with Princess Ruadam, daughter of King Giorgi XI of Kartli (then fighting in Afghanistan). Ruadam's maternal grandfather, the Imeretian prince Giorgi Mikeladze, persuaded Giorgi VII to marry her: Giorgi VII was thus a relative of King Vakhtang VI, who sent Giorgi money. Tamar Abashidze hated Prince Mikeladze for enabling Giorgi VII

to challenge her family; she had her new husband, Liparitiani, send men from Mingrelia to confiscate Mikeladze's lands and drive the prince out to Kartli. But the Abashidzes' power was draining away. Liparitiani's brother Iese (married to Giorgi VII's aunt Mariam) changed sides; Liparitiani had to broaden his power base against Iese and Giorgi VII: still keeping his own landholdings, Liparitiani appointed one son, Katsia, as Dadiani of Mingrelia, and another, Gabriel, bishop of Chqondidi.

The unity imposed by Giorgi Abashidze on western Georgia disintegrated. Guria and Mingrelia reverted to slave-trading (in Imeretia slavery was Abashidze's monopoly). Vakhtang VI proposed Giorgi Abashidze a lifeline: if Giorgi's son Levan married Vakhtang's daughter, he could occupy the Abashidze lands in Kartli. But Abashidze feared Vakhtang would send his son to Iran for 'confirmation'. Abashidze refused; Vakhtang VI now backed Giorgi VII. By 1707 Giorgi VII dared to leave the castle to be crowned. Although the new king was backed by Catholicos Grigol and most Imeretian nobles, Abashidze would not go. He summoned his son-in-law Liparitiani, and they defeated Giorgi VII and his Rachan supporters in battle. But the Liparitiani and Abashidze nexus was crumbling. Tamar Abashidze fell ill and died; her stepsons, who never forgave Liparitiani for divorcing their mother, sided with Giorgi VII; so did Abashidze's three nephews, one of whom (Vakhushti) eventually married Vakhtang VI's daughter Anuka and moved to the Abashidze lands in western Kartli.

In 1709 King Giorgi VII crushed Abashidze and his Mingrelian and Rachan allies, ransoming the prisoners for much-needed silver. Two years of war ensued in Mingrelia, Guria and Racha, and on the lands of Abashidze's allies. By 1711 Giorgi VII, even more rapacious than Giorgi Abashidze, lost support. Mamia III of Guria grabbed the throne; Giorgi Abashidze and Giorgi VII both sought refuge with King Vakhtang who ended the feud by taking Abashidze's son and daughter hostage. Abashidze then returned to Imeretia, and Giorgi VII to Akhaltsikhe. The following year, Giorgi VII secretly invaded Imeretia and, with Zurab, an Abashidze nephew, defeated Mamia Gurieli and reclaimed his throne for ten months. Sold into slavery, the Gurian prisoners complained: 'We've been sold for our own silver!' (Mamia had, at least, forbidden slave-trading. An unlikely modernizer, he had even opened schools in Guria.)

Russia had receded again. In 1710 Prince Aleksandre Bagration, Tsar Peter's close friend, was released by the Swedes, but died in Riga of kidney stones; his grief-stricken father, King Archil, died two years later, leaving only female heirs. Nothing and nobody could stop western Georgia drowning in treachery and warfare.

Abashidze and Mamia III Gurieli, supported by Vakhtang VI's son Bakar and brother Catholicos Domenti III, plotted a comeback. Giorgi

VII was preoccupied with private revenge: hating his wife, Vakhtang VI's daughter Ruadam, infatuated with Tamar, wife of Abashidze's son-in-law, he had the son-in-law, Giorgi Nizharadze, blinded. In winter 1713–14, Mamia Gurieli snatched the throne: the Gurians sang, 'The Imeretians have given us back our silver'. But Mamia III died in January 1714; Giorgi VII became king yet again: immediately he had the blind Nizharadze hurled from a cliff. Giorgi was then forced by Kartli's King Iese (Vakhtang VI's brother) to swear on the cross to take back Princess Ruadam and his son; Giorgi swore the oath, then dispatched wife and son to a remote castle in Svanetia. Two years later, Giorgi VII angered Mingrelia and Guria so much that they asked the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe to intervene: Giorgi IV of Guria took Imeretia's throne for a few months, but was deposed by his own mother. (Giorgi Gurieli, like his father Mamia III, opened schools, importing from Sinop Archbishop Pimen, a former slave from Tusheti, to run them.) Giorgi VII attempted a last comeback; while in Akhaltsikhe he married Tamar Kochibrola ('Crystal-Ankles'), daughter of Giorgi Gurieli, and ex-wife of a Dadiani (the Tamar whom Giorgi VII abducted from Giorgi Nizharadze had died; his legitimate wife, Princess Ruadam, had her castle in Svanetia ravaged by Mingrelians and Imeretians). The Paşas of Erzurum and Akhaltsikhe could not agree whom to support in Imeretia, so sent Giorgi VII in 1717 to Istanbul. In his absence the princes of Mingrelia, Racha and Guria pursued even more frantic wife- and land-grabbing, slave-trading and warfare, so that in August 1719 (August was the Ottomans' preferred month for invading Imeretia) the sultan reinstalled Giorgi VII, thwarting western Georgia's nobility, but relieving desperate commoners. In February 1720 Simon Abashidze murdered Giorgi VII at a banquet and sold his retinue to slave-dealers; Giorgi Gurieli seized the throne. But Imeretians longed for legitimate, stable rule. Two Abashidze brothers, Simon and Levan, answered Vakhtang VI's call to campaign with him in the south and east. Now, with the support of Bezhan Dadiani (who had succeeded his brother Katsia in 1710), the Ottomans crowned Aleksandre V, son of the murdered Giorgi VII. With interruptions, Aleksandre held Imeretia's throne for 32 years.

At first, Bezhan Dadiani dominated western Georgia, the Turks controlled Kutaisi, while Aleksandre V managed just his crown estates. Bezhan, who tried to suppress slave-trading, strengthened his hand by marrying his daughter Mariam to Aleksandre V. The new king relied on handouts from King Vakhtang of Kartli and bribed his nobility by granting them castles and land, until he had none left to give. King Aleksandre's stepmother, Tamar of Guria, accompanied the bishop of Chqondidi (the Dadiani's uncle) to Akhaltsikhe to intrigue against the king. But the Paşa handed them to Bezhan Dadiani, who imprisoned Tamar and defrocked his uncle (a notorious atheist and sodomite).

Aleksandre now drew closer to Vakhtang; Imeretians joined Kartlians attacking Ganja in 1721–2. But Aleksandre had to placate magnates like Abashidze, who ruthlessly sold peasant families, and he could not stop peasants fleeing to Kartli or Samtskhe. (Giorgi Gurieli, when on the throne, sold peasant families to the Turks only if they had tax arrears.) Life in Ottoman Akhaltsikhe was corrupt, but peaceful: Imeretia's peasants, slaves or refugees there, felt little nostalgia.

By 1722 western Georgia was effectively under Ottoman control: 500 janissaries with heavy artillery held Kutaisi; 100 more held Sukhumi; and 200, Poti. When Peter the Great ceded all Georgia to the Ottomans at the Treaty of Küçük Kainarca on 12 July 1724 and Vakhtang VI, having gambled and lost, left for Russia, all hope vanished. King Aleksandre V had sent envoys to Russia in 1722; Shoshita, duke of Racha did the same in 1724. They had no reply. Guria became pro-Turkish; the Abashidzes gave the Ottomans the border fortress of Shorapani. Fortunately, the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe held back, for fear of being sent to the front in Africa if he finished conquering Imeretia. The sultan considered Imeretia a backwater compared to the Balkans, and Ottoman garrisons, often ethnic Georgians or Abkhaz, fraternized with the population.

During eight grim years of *turkoba* (Turkish tyranny), Kartli and Kakhetia's King Konstantine evaded capture and led an insurgency, working with Lezgi raiders; he sent Zebede, a monk whom the late Prince Aleksandre Bagration had befriended, to seek Russian help, but only asylum was offered. Konstantine remained Muslim, 'proud and ready to kill the lower orders' when converting Kakhetian peasants; but he could not bridle his Lezgi mercenaries, who claimed a share of Kartli. Lezgi raided and looted even Samtskhe, but when they tried to settle in Kakhetia, they were massacred by the indigenous population. Meanwhile, the Ottomans reassigned eastern Kakhetia to the Dagestani Avars and Tsakhurs, and relocated Ossetians deeper into Kartli. Ishak Paşa of Akhaltsikhe oversaw King Iese's reign in Kartli; six provinces of Kartli were governed by Georgian noblemen answerable to the Paşa.

Double taxation, by king and by Ottomans, sent the population into exile or the clutches of moneylenders. Landowners who remained Christian lost entitlement. Merchants lost their trade with Iran. Ottoman criminal justice outraged Georgians: hangings, crucifixions and floggings caused rebellions, as did the humiliation of lords who were slow supplying horses – they were themselves saddled, ridden and whipped. The fractious dukes of the Aragvi and Ksani valleys had their lands ravaged.

Only Dagestan's ever bolder raids for cattle and slaves (which hurt tax revenues) united the Ottomans and their Georgian subjects: a joint Kartlian-Ottoman force drove back the Lezgi in 1732, and in 1733 Mamuka Mukhranbatoni and Ishak Paşa built a defensive wall together.

But refugee peasants would not return: emigration, slave-trading and plague epidemics so reduced Kartli's population that wild animals took over inhabited areas and attacked the survivors.

Kakhetia was neglected by Konstantine: he wanted to conquer Kartli, not to revive his own kingdom. On 28 December 1732, fearing Kakhetia was gravitating to the Iranians, the Ottomans murdered Konstantine while he negotiated with Yusuf Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. Konstantine's brother Teimuraz II, heir to the throne, fled to Pshavia. The Ottomans occupied Kakhetia, and, when Teimuraz surrendered, made him king.

Under Abbas III, Iran recovered, whereas Turkey was deteriorating. Bardzim, duke of Aragvi, wrote to Russia, urging King Vakhtang VI to return; Shanshe, duke of Ksani, also wrote in 1733, but Vakhtang was utterly dispirited. In 1734 Iranian forces recaptured Shemakha, and in 1735 Ganja, driving Russia off the coast between Baku and Derbent, and stopping Georgians who emigrated with Vakhtang in 1724 from returning. Givi Amilakhori, Lower Kartli's governor under the Ottomans, rebelled and cleared Gori of its Ottoman garrison. Teimuraz II and the Iranians freed Kakhetia of Ottomans and Lezgi. In Tbilisi and Erevan the Ottomans were overwhelmed by Iranians and Georgians under Tamaz Quli Khan. In 1736 Turkey, at war with both Austria and Russia, gave up Kartli and Kakhetia.

Tamaz Quli Khan distrusted the Georgians, imprisoning several when they conferred in Erevan. The Iranians preferred Teimuraz II's Muslim nephew Aleksandre (Nazar Ali Mirza) to rule Kakhetia and Kartli. Tamaz Quli Khan in 1736, as Nader Shah, recaptured Kandahar in 1738. Nader Shah was as hard on the Kartlians as the Turks: Tbilisi had to provide 8,000 tumans; the peasantry, 3,000 as well as 75,000 bushels of wheat and 2,000 soldiers. Aleksandre, now king of Kakhetia and Kartli, returned with an Iranian general, Sefi Khan, and even harsher tax demands. Some Kartlian nobles, like Bardzim, duke of Aragvi, remained pro-Iranian; others, like Shanshe, duke of Ksani, supported Teimuraz II, blockading Sefi Khan in Tbilisi citadel.

In 1737 an Iranian army came to enforce Iranian suzerainty: Shanshe of Ksani fled to Imeretia and thence to Russia, to persuade Prince Bakar, Vakhtang's son, to return. Cold-shouldered by the Russians, Shanshe returned to fight. Nader Shah, preoccupied by war on India, conceded that a Christian king would best keep Kartli and Kakhetia peaceful and spare him from fighting on two fronts. First, he took with him to Isfahan Teimuraz, his son Erekle and his daughter Ketevan as hostages: Nader Shah married Ketevan to a relative, and enlisted Erekle, who had military genius, for the Indian front. After two years, Teimuraz came back with his suite to be king of Kakhetia. Given Iran's strength, Teimuraz II remained pro-Iranian, delegating his choice of Catholicos-patriarch in 1741 and

1744 to Nader Shah. But Kartli was in chaos: Shanshe, duke of Ksani, had attacked his neighbour, the duke of Aragvi, massacring his serfs and soldiers.

Dagestani raiders made for an Iranian–Kartlian–Kakhetian alliance: Georgians were desperate to stop the Lezgi descending on Tbilisi for hostages; Iranians wanted a base to fend off Russia's incursions over the Caucasus. War against Dagestan impoverished Georgia, for the ramshackle Iranian army demanded 3,000 cartloads of grain and 2,000 yoke of oxen. Some Georgians sided with the Lezgi and their Ottoman masters. By 1740 Nader Shah, who had resentful, war-ravaged subjects in Shirvan and Kurdistan, felt it best to conclude a treaty by which the Lezgi bought, rather than robbed, grain and salt. To raise money he took an inventory of Georgia: every house, animal and vine was taxed. After harvest failures in 1741 and 1742, peasants again began fleeing to Ottoman territory, destroying their taxable property, or selling their children as slaves at two tumans each.

Civil war exacerbated bad harvests. To quell rebels, Teimuraz abolished the duchies of Ksani and Aragvi, and set the Tush on the Aragvi valley Ossetians. In 1745 Surami was besieged for five months: Teimuraz delivered its lord, the last rebel, Givi Amilakhori, to Iran. Freed of Iranian tribute, Teimuraz was confirmed as king of Kartli, while his son Erekle became king of Kakhetia. Their joint coronation in Mtskheta on 1 October 1745 was the first time a Persian shah fully recognized Georgia's Christian monarchs. (The diplomacy of Teimuraz's second wife Queen Ana, who married their daughter Ketevan to Nader Shah's nephew, Ali Quli Khan, smoothed the way.)

But, increasingly demented, Nader Shah gave his prisoner Givi Amilakhori command of a punitive army of 30,000, and then summoned King Erekle to Iran. In 1747 King Teimuraz, more persuasive, less afraid of being blinded, went in Erekle's stead, but in June, before king and shah met, Nader Shah was murdered. Teimuraz was welcomed to Qazvin by Nader's nephew Ali Quli Khan, who wanted Teimuraz's support to win the Iranian throne. All Iranian garrisons left Georgia.

In Teimuraz's absence, another nephew, Isak-Beg, son of Iese, laid claim to Kartli. While Erekle suppressed Isak-Beg's insurgency, nobody slept in Tbilisi for days: cannonballs reduced the royal palace and Sioni cathedral to rubble. Dmanisi was destroyed. But Erekle emerged triumphant and then invaded the Armenian and Azerbaijani khanates, making Erevan and Nakhichevan dependencies, restoring Georgia's medieval borders. Widowed the previous year, Teimuraz II returned in 1749. Now Kakhetia's and Kartli's kings were Iran's kingmakers: the traveller Jonas Hanway said that King Erekle's 'fortune [was] yet said to prevail over all competition' and believed that, but for his Christian faith, Erekle

might become shah.[11] Nader's nephew Ali Quli Khan, now Adil Shah, was blinded by his brother Ibrahim, and Ibrahim was murdered. Teimuraz installed Nader's son Shah Rokh, who ruled until 1760. Georgian exiles and prisoners returned home. Rokh even forgave Kartli for massacring Tbilisi's Iranian garrison. He regularly sent Teimuraz presents, making him commander-in-chief, and Erekle deputy-commander of Iranian forces in the north-west.

Iran's decline inaugurated a period of prosperity in eastern Georgia: wastelands, some with just one per cent of their former population, bloomed. Kartli's and Kakhetia's shrunken population – about 42,000 households (perhaps 250,000 people) doubled in a generation. In 1747 slave-trading nobles did penance before the Catholicos, Anton the Great (King Iese's son). Kartli's and Kakhetia's borders were now secure, and Imeretia's king Aleksandre v was an ally by marriage.

Culture flourished. Printing in Tbilisi resumed in 1749: King Erekle wanted canonical liturgical texts and a standardized language. He set up his press in a ten-room building adjoining his mint, using a Turkish-Armenian typographer, later licensing first a Georgian, Kristepore Kezherashvili, as royal printer, then Abram, a Jew who had become abbot of Garesja.[12] Over 40 years some 40 titles, all liturgical – except an account of the king's importing printing from Constantinople, and a 128-page *Wisdom of China*, translated from Russian – were printed in runs of up to 1,000.

In the 1750s western Georgia was still Ottoman-dominated, largely detached from the progress made by Kartli and Kakhetia. Aleksandre v faced the same feudal strife as his predecessors: his rule relied on Bezhan Dadiani of Mingrelia, who refrained from betraying Aleksandre, his son-in-law, because the king had devoted bodyguards. With Bezhan's help Aleksandre took a fortress from the bishop of Gelati, brother to Shoshita, duke of Racha; in 1728 the two rulers destroyed Shoshita's castle at Skanda. But Aleksandre could not loosen the Ottoman hold on the coast and on fortresses like Geguti and Shorapani. In 1728 Zurab Abashidze asked the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe to send his son Yusuf to Geguti castle; Bezhan Dadiani, assured of safe conduct, agreed to meet Yusuf and was stabbed to death the moment he entered the castle.

Once Dadiani was murdered, Aleksandre v felt secure. He even dared to collaborate with the Ottomans, fighting Circassian and Abkhaz pirates alongside the Paşa of Poti in 1730. Otia Dadiani, who avoided his father Bezhan's fate, saw this campaign as an attack, and Imeretia as Mingrelia's enemies. Aleksandre belatedly realized that collaborating with Turkey undermined his security: he withdrew, just as Abkhaz guerrillas were defeating the Turks. Meanwhile, Otia, the Abashidzes and the duke of Racha plotted Aleksandre's overthrow. First, Otia married his sister to his candidate

for Imeretia's throne, Aleksandre's brother Mamuka. Rebels barricaded Aleksandre v in Kutaisi castle (they dared not fire cannon, for fear of Ottoman reaction). In 1732 Aleksandre tried his own marital alliances: widowed and no longer the Dadiani's brother-in-law, he married Levan Abashidze's daughter; then he disarmed Guria by marrying his daughter to Mamia IV Gurieli.

Otia and the duke of Racha, however, still wanted Aleksandre dead. The king suborned the duke's brother, Gedevan, bishop of Gelati, by letting him leave the Church to marry a Kartlian princess and making him the 'Duke of the Valley'. But civil war erupted in the snowy winter of 1732 at the battle of Chikhori. Otia Dadiani was wounded and captured, and his brother Katsia killed; troublesome Rachan and Mingrelian prisoners were sold to the Ottomans.

Aleksandre v repeatedly contacted Russia, but his envoy Archimandrite Nikoloz lost Tsarina Anna's reply on his way home in 1732. When the Russo–Turkish war broke out and Russia captured Azov in June 1736, help seemed near. In 1737 Aleksandre sent the refugee Shanshe, duke of Ksani, and Timotei Gabashvili, bishop of Kutaisi, with 35 men to Moscow; they took Gabashvili's map of western Georgia, a new oath of fealty, plans for a war of liberation, and their usual request for 20,000 soldiers. But the 1739 Belgrade treaty ended the Russo–Turkish war: Russia lost interest in ousting Turkey from Transcaucasia.

Aleksandre tried reconciliation: after nursing Otia Dadiani back to health he offered him the governorship of Lechkhumi. But Turkey, on a divide-and-rule principle, threatened Aleksandre with a Kartli-Turkish invasion if Dadiani were not restored to Mingrelia. The king caved in, sacrificing a daughter to a Turkish general, and land to his alienated brother Mamuka. Aleksandre's treasury was empty: he resorted to slave-trading to pay the Ottoman dues: Catholicos Grigol remonstrated in vain. (Money was even tighter in Mingrelia: a French government report of 1747 concluded that trade was impossible, since even the Catholicos, for lack of silver coin, settled debts in slaves.[13]) Marital alliances endangered Aleksandre: he beheaded his son-in-law Davit Abashidze and Papuna Tsereteli for treason. The bereft Zurab Abashidze embroiled the duke of Racha and Otia Dadiani in another conspiracy. Forewarned, Aleksandre had Shanshe, duke of Ksani, and 500 Lezgi tribesmen ravage his enemies' lands. Using Muslim Lezgi against Christian Georgians was taboo: Aleksandre had to dismiss the Lezgi and forbid them to take slaves. Aleksandre next had Zurab Abashidze's brother Vakhushti kidnapped in Kartli and held to ransom. Catholicos Domenti remonstrated, but was snubbed. Yusuf Paşa sent a finely saddled horse, a fur coat and 20 bags of silver: this ransom was refused.

Aleksandre's obduracy drove Otia Dadiani, the Abkhaz and Zurab Abashidze in 1740 to burn down the royal palace at Vartsikhe: the king

and queen barely escaped. In 1741 Yusuf Paşa's army forced Aleksandre to yield the throne to his younger brother Giorgi and take his family to Kartli. Initially Aleksandre was treated in Kartli as royalty, but was then imprisoned. He was freed only after the Duke of the Valley interceded with Nader Shah in Derbent. At Nader Shah's bidding, the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe, without consulting the sultan, restored Aleksandre. But Aleksandre v still faced opposition: now the ringleader was his stepmother, Tamar 'Crystal-Ankles'. A former princess of Guria, a guest in Akhaltsikhe and a prisoner of the Dadiani, she owed gratitude to everyone but the Imeretian king. Aleksandre had her beheaded, expelled his brother Giorgi's supporters and sold their families to the Ottomans. Zurab Abashidze fled. Levan, now chief Abashidze and Aleksandre's father-in-law, found his loyalties strained.

In 1743 another revolt sent Aleksandre to the Ottomans in Akhaltsikhe for help: this time the duke of Racha was killed. The new duke, his brother Vakhtang, respected Aleksandre for three years. A revolt in 1746 put Aleksandre's brother Mamuka on the throne; in 1749, with the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe's help, Aleksandre recovered the throne. He died in 1752.

Kartli and Kakhetia, unlike Imeretia, were united and strong. King Erekle II, a brilliant general and administrator, if lacking Teimuraz's diplomatic talent, expanded Georgia and ignored the antagonism this aroused. Erekle strengthened royal authority, organizing his administration on Russian lines. He expanded the taxable population and thus sustained the state and army. He appointed agents known as *mqrelebi* (gatherers) to induce, even force refugee serfs in Nakhichevan and Karabagh back to their lands, or to settle them on crown lands. Migrants were lured from Ottoman-held Javakheti; new settlers had tax exemptions. Ossetians, if Christian, were moved to the valleys; envoys went to the Russian garrison town of Mozdok in the north Caucasus, offering land to Georgian refugees, and to Circassian and Russian settlers (a proposal which Russia vetoed). Armenians were settled, not all voluntarily, in southern Kakhetia, Tbilisi and Gori. Russian travellers report a programme to repopulate Qvareli in Kakhetia, planting vines and peach trees, settling 250 Türkmen families from Iran.

Serfs were not, however, mollycoddled: Erekle condoned force 'to stop them complaining'. But landowners were blamed for runaways – 'God forbid a serf should be lost or turn into a Cossack' – and those who sexually abused serfs were severely reprimanded. In 1754 and in 1770 selling serfs without their land was forbidden; Erekle, the Catholicos and the *darbazi* announced that former prisoners of war or slaves would be free peasants on crown lands on returning to Georgia. Some Church peasants and veteran soldiers became freemen; most peasants remained

serfs, but freemen were now common among the working population.

Agriculture was modernized: new varieties of grain grew in Tusheti's highlands. Grain was kept cheap, and famine became a distant memory. Peasants paid taxes in fruit or walnuts. Factories produced sugar, glass, cloth and armaments. Gunpowder was, however, a crown monopoly. Mines and foundries, worked by 2,000 Greek specialists, produced non-ferrous and precious metals, including half a tonne of silver a year. Inheritance laws now protected merchants' estates from the crown. Tbilisi customs duty of two and a half per cent trebled revenue in the 1760s. Kartli and Kakhetia still traded with Iran, but Russia now bought silk and horses, in exchange for ironmongery, dinner services, paper and textiles. A judiciary, *mdivanbegis sasamartlo* (chief secretary's courts), was formed, while the king's darbazi had wide powers as a permanent supreme court and privy council, issuing verdicts and decrees. Government ministries formed a 'special council', with two ministers of foreign affairs, one Christian, one Muslim, and an influential mayor of Tbilisi. A police force came into being.

Kartli's upsurge made Ottoman Christians (Armenians and Assyrians) assertive. Many emigrated to Kartli, and Erekle welcomed them as a vanguard for rescuing Samtskhe from centuries of Ottoman rule.

Erekle's policies and landowners' exploitation aroused stormy opposition: when one lord (Eliozashvili) demanded more than the usual 50 days' work on his estates, peasants assaulted his family, burned his church and stole 500 casks of his wine. In 1773 Pshav tribesmen destroyed their lord's castle and held him hostage for two months; in 1777 Ksani peasants rebelled when Erekle proposed reviving the duchy. Bonds, compelling the wealthy to lend three tumans to the state, provoked anger when Erekle introduced them in 1780.

Teimuraz and Erekle continued expanding energetically south and east during the 1750s: Muslims were converted to Christianity; khanates (Karabagh, Ganja) acknowledged Georgian rule. Erekle even took Tabriz,[14] and defeated Azat Khan's Afghans and Uzbeks who challenged Shah Rokh, imprisoning Azat Khan for a decade in Tbilisi. There were reversals: for example, in February 1751 the khan of Shaki defeated and nearly captured Erekle. This was the first decade in many centuries when no war was fought on core Georgian territory. Neplyuyev, Russian ambassador in Istanbul, acknowledged Erekle as 'absolute ruler'. Erekle's conquests in Iran alarmed Russia, now unwilling to back him openly: Russia feared angering the Ottomans, and was perturbed by Georgia's interest in Iran, where Erekle might well become shah.

Dagestani raids still persisted: in 1752 the Lezgi agreed to peace, but throughout the 1750s the Avars sent armies of several thousand across Kakhetia and Kartli, avoiding battle, but causing devastation. Pressure

on the Avars from the north was needed; Teimuraz, still hoping that Russia would act as a protecting power, travelled north in 1760 to ask Russia for an army, or funds to hire mercenaries. He also tried to persuade Tsar Peter III to put a Russian puppet on the Iranian throne. Russia, embroiled in the Seven Years War, had, however, lost interest. Returning empty-handed to Kartli, Teimuraz died suddenly on 8 January 1762 in Astrakhan, leaving his son Erekle king of both Kartli and Kakhetia.

Teimuraz's Russian visit alarmed the power-holder of western Iran, Karim Khan: to him Kartli and Kakhetia were a Trojan horse in Iran. Karim Khan did not believe Erekle's disavowal of Teimuraz's initiative. If Azerbaijani's khans had not taken Erekle's side, Karim Khan would have invaded. Russia, pressed by England and France to leave the Caucasus to the Ottomans, now threw a spanner into Erekle's works. St Petersburg harboured alternative Bagratid candidates for Georgia's thrones; some had support inside Kartli. Vakhtang VI's bastard son Paata, a qualified artillery officer and cannon-founder, had been sent back to Kartli in 1752. Embittered by life in Russia on a tiny pension, under virtual house arrest, he conspired with disgruntled Mukhranbatonis and Amilakhoris, one of whom hated Erekle for forbidding him to marry the king's sister.

The resulting 1765 plot was wide-ranging. It involved Tbilisi merchants and the provincial lower classes, for it was betrayed by an artisan from Samshvilde. Erekle appointed a *darbazi*, including peasants as well as aristocrats, to try the conspirators in public, and testified himself. He left verdicts and sentences to the court: there were 22 acquittals (among them, it is said, the Azeri-Georgian-Armenian poet Sayat Nova) and some harsh sentences: Prince Paata and one other were beheaded, some were burned to death (normally a poisoner's penalty), one Amilakhori was imprisoned, another had his nose cut off, others lost their tongues. (Russian 'enlightenment' under Erekle II encouraged mutilation and capital punishment.)

After Paata's execution, Russia pitched another rival against Erekle. In 1766 the Empress Catherine 'deigned to release' Prince Aleksandre, Bakar's son and Vakhtang VI's grandson, 'to seek his fortune'. A guards officer, born in Russia, Aleksandre first went to Shiraz to ask Karim Khan for help, and, when Karim Khan died in 1779, was brought by King Solomon to Imeretia; he tried at the end of the 1770s to foment rebellion in Tbilisi; in 1782 he and the mutilated Aleksandre Amilakhori went to Dagestan. Aleksandre was arrested, at Erekle's request, by the Russians, dying nine years later in Smolensk prison.

In the 1770s Erekle reformed his army with Russian advisers, training manuals and ranks. A royal guard formed the core of a permanent paid army (still allowed to loot, though). Tbilisi had a ramshackle gunpowder factory, where pedal-operated machines mixed saltpetre, sulphur and

charcoal in a giant walnut mortar with a granite pestle.[15] In 1774 compulsory army service – one male from each household serving at his own expense for one month per year – was introduced. Civic development lagged behind: the botanist Güldenstädt thought Tbilisi in 1772 a filthy city of 20,000, crowded into rickety houses with windows of oiled paper, for want of glass: he was not surprised to learn that 4,000 died of plague in 1770.

In 1752 the seventeen-year-old Solomon I inherited his father Aleksandre V's throne: Imeretia and all western Georgia began to emerge from turmoil, and King Erekle II dreamed of reuniting Georgia. Solomon had the willpower and courage needed to free Imeretia from the Turks and nobility's thrall. He saw Teimuraz and Erekle centralizing and reinforcing the crown's authority, but he faced entrenched resistance from degenerate princes and dukes. Not just Mamia Gurieli and Besarion, Catholicos of Abkhazia (brother of Rostom, duke of Racha), but Solomon's own kin – his grandfather Levan Abashidze, uncles Mamuka and Giorgi, his own mother Tamar – forced him to flee to Akhaltsikhe for Ottoman protection. The Paşa gladly protected an apparently malleable youth; Solomon, pretending to be an Ottoman vassal, was restored. He avenged himself, banishing his mother to Mingrelia, imprisoning his uncles, confiscating his grandfather's estates, sending Ottoman soldiers to punish Guria and, for a few months, replacing Mamia with his brother Giorgi. The Rachans, Duke Rostom and Catholicos Besarion, however, still enjoyed impunity.

Solomon bolstered his position by remarriage: since Mingrelia was the strongest principality, he divorced his Abkhaz princess Tinatin, and married Mariam, daughter of Otia Dadiani. Mariam could read and write far better than Solomon, and proved a wise counsellor. Solomon then made an ally of Mamia Gurieli, and set about wooing the lesser nobility. The king won popularity by campaigns against Islam and slave-trading. But it was hard to pay Ottoman taxes when the kingdom had neither money nor linen, but only human beings, particularly young girls, to offer. Ottoman penetration of western Georgia had destroyed trade, institutions, morals and political coherence. The Church, the traditional basis for national resistance, was demoralized: Solomon restored to the Church lands and serfs which the nobility had taken, and freed it of most taxation. Slave-trading then became a capital offence, thus impoverishing Imeretia's lords (who paid the Ottomans for a horse, a sabre, or even a jar of caviar with a boy or a girl). Solomon's executions were gruesome: bodies were fired from a wooden cannon, or buried alive in quicklime.

Solomon imitated Teimuraz's and Erekle's measures in Kartli and Kakhetia to revive agriculture and repopulate the countryside: in one concession Solomon warned landowners: 'Wherever you have peasants, no labour and no tithes whatsoever are ever to be demanded.' To break the

nobility's stranglehold over the peasantry, throughout the 1750s Solomon bought, confiscated or demolished their castles. Solomon made many lords 'sworn men': every 15 May, all adult 'sworn' males, their serfs, their clergy carrying icons, and, in times of war, 1,000 armed men, would assemble at Lekertsa meadow, renew their oaths, and then feast for two weeks. Sworn men had access to the king and pardon for all crimes except treason.

Solomon's prohibition of slavery stirred the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe to action. The Paşa inveigled Solomon's uncle Mamuka, then sheltering in Samtskhe, as his agent; he restored to power, but failed to suborn, Mamia as Gurieli; he incited to rebellion the Abashidzes and Rostom, duke of Racha, whose province, protected by Svanetia's mountains to the north and the river Rioni to the south, was near-impregnable. In autumn 1757 Levan Abashidze led an Ottoman army into Imeretia. The country split: upper Imeretia rebelled, lower Imeretia supported Solomon. The Ottomans held the citadels. Solomon drafted every man capable of fighting and was supported by Mamia Gurieli and the Mingrelians under Katsia, son of the aged Otia Dadiani.

The battle of Khresili of 14 December 1757 resurrected Imeretia: it ended, albeit at heavy cost to the Imeretians and Mingrelians, with Abashidze's and Rostom's men changing sides and the slaughter of the Ottoman army, including the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. Levan Abashidze was killed; Rostom fled back to Racha. There were two more battles in 1758: first a defeat, then a conclusive victory for Solomon.

The Ottomans still threatened: Solomon agreed to pay tribute, but not to export slaves. Haji Ahmed, Paşa of Akhaltsikhe, responded by letting Turks and Lezgi wreck Gelati monastery and rob the population. Solomon went to Akhaltsikhe to remonstrate: the Paşa gave him 3,000 soldiers, ostensibly to punish the Turkish garrisons for looting. Before they even crossed the border, Solomon's 'sworn men' massacred the entire Turkish contingent. For this fiasco the sultan had Haji Ahmed strangled. In 1759 a new Paşa, Ibrahim, took over. Solomon sent Queen Mariam to negotiate a treaty, but talks foundered when the Paşa insisted on the export of slaves.

In 1758 Solomon began the process of reunification: he met King Erekle in Gori and signed a mutual assistance pact. Erekle and Solomon had already helped each other when they both faced Lezgi raiders, and Solomon employed Russian-trained Kartlian officers. In 1760 Solomon, the Dadiani and the duke of Racha sent 15,000 men to help Erekle attack Ganja. The Treaty of Amasya of 1555 still, in theory, forbade cooperation between Ottoman and Iran-dominated Georgian kings, but Iran was now too weak to intervene. In 1760 and 1761 Solomon repelled two Ottoman punitive expeditions; a third invasion in 1763 failed when the Paşa's

Kurdish troops mutinied because they were diverted from looting. The Ottomans tried to invade Imeretia via Kartli, but were blocked by King Erekle.

In December 1759 Solomon called a combined parliament and Church synod, including Mingrelia and Guria. For a month they discussed reorganizing the Church and suppressing slave-trading.[16] Solomon made the Church, as in Kartli, an executive branch of the crown. The bishopric of Kutaisi was revived and endowed; the Church could keep serfs and land taken from laymen; its serfs were exempt from state taxes; laymen could not interfere in Church affairs; unworthy priests were unfrocked, church buildings restored.

The stronger Solomon grew, the harder the Ottomans tried to overthrow him: in 1764 they gave his nephew Teimuraz an army after he agreed to sell slaves. In 1765 the Turks invaded, appointed a new prince of Guria, intimidated the Dadiani, and won over the duke of Racha. In 1766 Turks and slave-trading lords crowned Teimuraz in Kutaisi.[17] Solomon with just four followers fled to the Tsereteli brothers' castle Modimnakhe ('Come-and-see-me'). Teimuraz, however, never left the safety of the Kutaisi garrison. But the Ottomans resented paying some 300,000 silver roubles to maintain 45,000 soldiers in hostile territory, particularly when the Russian ambassador in Istanbul protested. A treaty was proposed; Solomon asked King Erekle of Kartli to negotiate. In 1766 Erekle's mediator accompanied Solomon's brother, the bishop of Gelati, to Istanbul. Solomon finally agreed to send 60 girls annually, provided that they need not be ethnic Georgians, in exchange for Ottoman non-interference in what it now called a protectorate, not a vassal kingdom. Neither side was sincere: Solomon was not going to provide slave-girls; the Turks were not about to hand Solomon back his crown. In 1768 Solomon hired Lezgi to defeat Guria, Mingrelia and Racha, and dethrone his nephew Teimuraz (who was imprisoned with his brother and never seen again).

That year the six-year Russo–Turkish War began. Solomon had often appealed to Russia: in 1764 he asked Prince Aleksandre Bakaris-dze to intercede with Catherine II; in 1766 he sent Archimandrite Grigol, a missionary in Ossetia, to warn the Russian commander of the north Caucasus that Solomon would need asylum if defeated by the Turks. The Russian ambassador in Istanbul offered to arbitrate with the Turks: Sultan Mustafa III then recognized the 'renowned Christian ruler Solomon, King of Imeretia'.

Solomon now focused on Rostom's Rachan duchy, which had existed since the thirteenth century. Racha had just 30,000 people in 56 villages, but its sovereignty was recognized by Russia. It was well fortified and richer than Solomon's kingdom. Rostom's brother Besarion became Catholicos in 1765, and Rostom was esteemed by Italian missionaries.

Solomon envied Kings Teimuraz and Erekle who had with cannons abolished the rebellious duchies of the Aragvi and Ksani, but Racha's terrain precluded the use of artillery. Solomon tried – in 1767 with Lezgi mercenaries – to subdue Racha. His Mingrelian allies and his *darbazi* thought attacking Rostom unwise. But Solomon mustered all his forces and on 28 January 1769 was successful: Rostom was deserted by the Circassians and King Erekle II, whom he had often supported. Solomon could not catch the duke, however, and proposed a truce, while Rostom's Catholicos brother asked the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe to help topple Solomon. In response, Solomon hired Lezgi from Dagestan, who pursued Rostom into Mingrelia. Solomon then sent his brother Ioseb to the Paşa to propose peace in exchange for Catholicos Besarion in chains. Fearing Solomon might fight for Russia in the Russo–Turkish war, the Paşa arrested the Catholicos, who smashed his way through a chimney, sought asylum from his nephew, Katsia Dadiani, and became a Mingrelian 'Catholicos'. Solomon dismissed Catholicos Besarion and appointed his own brother Ioseb.

In May 1769 Solomon made peace with Rostom, to free Imeretia from civil war and enable it to participate in the Russo–Turkish war. Catholicos Ioseb went to Racha and swore in church on a chalice of brandy that the king pardoned Rostom, who then set off with his seven sons (guarantors of loyalty to the king), an armed escort, a hundred horses and mules, casks of wine, a flock of sheep and a field kitchen to Vartsikhe palace. Rostom's sons were met by the king's guards: a three-week banquet began. Solomon then invited his guests to a hare hunt; Rostom and his sons accepted eagerly. When they came to cross the Rioni by boat, Solomon had Rostom's guards left on the other bank of the river with no means of crossing. Each Rachan was then attacked by four men, bound hand and foot and had their eyes burned out.

Expecting a Russian army to enter Imeretia, nobody dared reproach Solomon for this atrocity. He abolished Racha's duchy, confiscated its lands (some went to Catholicos Ioseb), restored Rostom's enemies to their estates, and formally banned the duke's posterity from their patrimony. Rostom was imprisoned, but eventually released. Four of Rostom's sons fled to Istanbul. A Capuchin medical missionary Dionisio restored some sight to the blinded. The eldest son Metode, who had some sight in both eyes, devoted his remaining years to revenge. On his last return to Imeretia, he was captured: Solomon had his eyes gouged out to the core. But, after sheltering in Kartli, Metode returned in 1799 and extracted from Solomon II some of his patrimonial lands. Metode's brother Giorgi, who had one working eye, was backed by the sultan to succeed Solomon, but in 1784 ceded his claim to his brother-in-law Davit.[18]

Openly at war with Turkey, Catherine the Great announced protection for Imeretia and promised military support. As she told Voltaire, she gladly

opened a fourth front against the Ottomans, although Imeretia was less important than other fronts – Danube, Greece or the Crimea. King Erekle agreed to wage war on the Turks, too, once the Russians promised help. On 21 May 1759 Solomon visited Tbilisi to coordinate their campaign. Solomon aimed to use Russian arms to crush his rebels, recover the Black Sea ports and expel all Turks from western Georgia; Erekle primarily wanted to recover Samtskhe, suppress the Lezgi and extend southeast Kakhetia to the Caucasian foothills. Russia, however, intended to turn the Black Sea into a Russian, not Ottoman, lake: saving, unifying, even acquiring Georgia was not yet on the agenda.

Of 20,000 Russian troops just 400 men, with cannon and officers, under General Totleben and a Russified Georgian, Anton Mouravov, materialized in 1769. Totleben was sentenced to death for betraying military secrets to the Prussians, but Catherine the Great, who admired Prussia, reprieved him: he remained treacherous, arrogant and incompetent, treating the experienced Georgian kings as ignorant tribesmen. Totleben's men were met by Erekle at the Daryal Pass, and by Solomon on the Imeretian border. In October the Russian-Kartlian-Imeretian force besieged the Turks in the border fortress of Shorapani. But after four days Totleben withdrew for lack of supplies. He returned in March 1770 with 800 more men and three more cannon. Although the Dadiani now joined the allies, Totleben moved up the Kura, not into Imeretia, and attacked Atsquri, the border town with Ottoman Samtskhe. He ignored Erekle's advice to advance to Akhaltsikhe and surprise the Paşa, who now reinforced Atsquri. Unaided, Erekle won a brilliant victory on 20 April 1770 at nearby Aspindza, leaving fleeing Ottomans drowning in the swollen Kura. Totleben had withdrawn again, while the Ottomans brought up Dagestani reinforcements. Instead of attacking, Totleben plotted to overthrow Erekle, and made local nobles swear allegiance to Russia.

In summer Totleben 'supported' Solomon in Imeretia. Solomon had retaken Shorapani and Tsutskhvati castles; he now needed Russian artillery to take Kutaisi citadel. On 6 August the Turks left Kutaisi under cover of night, unhindered by Totleben's officers. Totleben wanted to take Poti, not for Solomon, but for the Russian navy. He dismissed Solomon's advice that warfare in the hot, miasmic Mingrelian summer was unwise; he renamed Poti after Catherine the Great, but could not take it. Instead, Totleben incited Guria and Mingrelia to rebel against Solomon and submit to Russia. Totleben's own Russian officers reported him to St Petersburg as a 'disgrace'.

In 1771 Totleben was replaced by General Sukhotin, an honest but even more arrogant man who blamed the Georgian kings for all his setbacks and likewise undermined their authority with the nobility. Sukhotin also besieged Poti in summer, losing half his army to disease

before withdrawing. At the end of 1771 Catherine withdrew from Georgia; all they achieved was to slaughter Turkish troops sent to reinforce Poti. By May 1772 all Russian troops had left Transcaucasia. Sending troops to Georgia had embarrassed Catherine the Great: she had to appease Karim Khan by swearing that no aggression was intended towards Iran, sending, as a gesture, 60 Russian soldiers to Shiraz. Western Georgia paid dearly for Russia's 'help'. Coastal Guria was incorporated by the Turks into Trabzon vilayet, and its population forcibly converted: Maksime of Guria became Beg of Kobuleti.

In despair, Erekle sent Catholicos Anton I to St Petersburg to negotiate protectorate status: he wanted 4,000 troops under Kartlian command, his throne to remain hereditary, the repatriation of Georgian prisoners freed in the Crimea. In return he offered his sons as hostages, tax revenues if Samtskhe reverted to the Georgian crown, half the tax income from Kartli's and Kakhetia's nobility, a tax for the upkeep of Russian garrisons, fourteen fine horses and a quantity of wine to the Russian HQ at Kizliar.

Russia was unresponsive. In 1773 Solomon and Erekle renewed their alliance, notifying Russia; their armies met in Gori and attacked Samtskhe, but broke off when Solomon fell ill. Erekle arbitrated between Mingrelia and Imeretia, and helped repel Ottoman incursions. On 6 February 1774 the Imeretians massacred a Turkish force in Chkherimela gorge. Fearing revenge, Solomon asked St Petersburg for protectorate status; Catherine replied that the new Küçük–Kainarca treaty forbade this, but that article 23 of the treaty recognized fortresses in Imeretia captured by Russian artillery as inviolate. The Ottomans, Catherine assured Solomon, had no more rights to slaves from Imeretia, and had to pardon any Imeretian who had attacked them, nor could Turkey infringe the rights of Christians in the *paşalık* of Çıldır. But the treaty gave the Turks a free hand south of the Rioni (as it did south of the Danube).

Solomon, however, was strong enough to subdue Mingrelia and the remains of Guria. On 5 October 1776 the Ottomans, for the first time, sent an ambassador to Kutaisi with presents. Western Georgia's Church was reunited. Mutual hostility prevented Turkey and Iran from reining in Georgian ambitions, but Solomon's and Erekle's alliance did not endure. The last time they cooperated was when sending the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe envoys to encourage him to break with Istanbul. The kings were disillusioned by each other, as well as by Russia's military incompetence and political bad faith. Russia froze them out, detaining Georgian missions in Astrakhan, unless there was particular advantage in letting them proceed to St Petersburg.

The two kings chose different paths. In 1778, after the sultan complained to Karim Khan of Iran 'Your vassal Erekle is a lion let loose on

our territory', Erekle stopped attacking Ottoman territory, and sent an embassy which was warmly welcomed in Istanbul: the sultan sent Erekle a sword and a horse with gold-embroidered tack. Erekle felt respected by the great powers on his borders, but Kakhetia's interests led Erekle to support Ottoman ambitions in Iran. Solomon, however, wanted Iran to counterbalance the Ottomans, and interpreted Erekle's démarche as a hostile act.

Northern Azerbaijan was in 1778 united under Fat'h Ali, a future shah; even with Ottoman support, Kakhetia's eastern frontiers were threatened. Fat'h Ali persuaded Ganja to stop paying Erekle tribute. Erekle's forces, with those of Karabagh, fought back; Ganja and its tax revenues were shared between Kartli and Karabagh. In August 1779 Erekle preempted the Iranians by occupying Erevan; the Armenian Catholicos offered submission and tribute, but Erekle demanded full surrender. Erevan was looted and thousands of Armenians deported to Georgia, while its khan had to share power with Erekle's son-in-law Konstantine Mukhranbatoni. These invasions, and the concordat with Turkey, alarmed both Russia and Iran. Erekle was too big for his boots, and found himself rushing back to Kartli to crush a Russian-backed pretender Aleksandre Bakaris-dze. Russia also disliked Erekle's plans to expand his army by resettling Circassians in Georgia. To cool Erekle's ardour, Russia backed Fat'h Ali.

In 1778, as Turkish troops massed on Imeretia's borders, Solomon secretly sent the poet and diplomat Besiki (Besarion Gabashvili) via Astrakhan to Iran, first to seek and offer help against the Ottomans, second to fetch the Kartlian pretender, Aleksandre Bakaris-dze, and menace his former ally Erekle. Astrakhan's governor was obstructive, but finally allowed Besiki to sail to Persia, no doubt because the pretender's return would put a brake on King Erekle's aggressiveness. In 1779 Karim Khan died: Imeretia lost any prospect of Iranian help against the Ottomans. But in autumn Besiki brought the pretender Aleksandre from Shiraz to Imeretia.

King Erekle and King Solomon were now harbouring each other's enemies: Solomon's estranged son Aleksandre and his retinue lived at Erekle's court; Elizbar, son of the ex-duke of Ksani, lived in Kutaisi, as did the entire Gabashvili family. Zakar Gabashvili, once King Erekle II's chaplain, had quarrelled with Catholicos Anton I (King Vakhtang VI's nephew) over the latter's Catholic and European tendencies. In 1755 the Catholicos resigned and left for Russia, but returned in 1764. Zakar Gabashvili fled to Imeretia in 1771. Zakar's son Besiki outraged Anton by writing scabrous verse and King Erekle by conducting affairs with higher-ranking women: denounced as an 'Antichrist', Besiki fled to Imeretia, becoming Solomon's best diplomat. But Solomon's protection of the Kartlian pretender

Aleksandre Bakaris-dze, and Erekle's of the prodigal Imeretian prince Aleksandre, mutually hostile acts, disrupted Imeretian–Kartlian relations: fortunately, the former fled to Dagestan in 1782, and the latter died in 1780.

Solomon fought on alone: in 1781 he tried, but failed to conquer Ajaria. Russia's conquest of the Crimea in 1783 raised his hopes, but the sultan warned him off contact with Russia. Only 48, Solomon was sick and, after his estranged heir Aleksandre died, childless: he sent his chaplain to Tbilisi to end hostility, and to adopt Erekle's grandson, Davit Archilis-dze, as Imeretia's next king, thus merging Imeretia with Kartli-Kakhetia. After consulting Russia's envoy Colonel Burnashov, Erekle sent the boy to Imeretia. Meanwhile, despite the Dadiani's treachery, Solomon led 6,000 men into Guria and, with local support, took the Turk-held port of Kobuleti, massacred every non-Georgian and ploughed up and salted all the land around the garrison ruins, before moving south to ravage and then abandon Batumi.

Disaster then struck. On 9 March 1784, at Nachishkrevi, the Ottomans ambushed Solomon's army in the forests: Solomon's horse was killed, and he and his retinue were rescued by Vakhtang, prince of Guria: he lost 620 men, including eighteen nobles; 200 men went to Trabzon as slaves. The Turks held Ajaria and half Guria for 90 years. Unprecedented defeat undid Solomon: on 23 April, on his way to the festival of St George at Khoni, he fell dead as he mounted his horse. The courier who informed the sultan was given a gown; Imeretia's nobles told Catherine the Great, 'We are orphans.'

By 1782 Catherine's ministers wondered if the time had come to tie Georgia to Russia: Imeretia was vulnerable to the Ottomans; Kartli-Kakhetia was out of control. Catherine saw Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia as cordons between Iran and Turkey and the Muslims of the Caucasus. Discussions were held with the head of the Armenian Church, Ioseb Arutinian, on how to rein in Erekle, now ready to seize Tabriz and capable of fielding 50,000 men. Russia and Austria had 'the Greek project' to expel the Turks from Europe: incorporating Transcaucasia would help the project. Catherine sent Jakob Reineggs,[19] a Hungarian Saxon, to negotiate with Erekle; Pavel Potiomkin, Catherine's confidant, took command of troops in the Caucasus.

While Imeretia would welcome any protectorate. Erekle feared a trap. He hastily sent two missions to Europe, asking for money, military and diplomatic support, ostensibly against the Ottomans. Despite intermittently harassing Tbilisi Catholics, Erekle regularly consulted Father Domenico, who on 14 March 1781 took Erekle's letter to the Austrian emperor. Domenico died in Constantinople, but his letters were delivered. On 14 November 1782 Mauro da Verona took letters for the pope, the

kings of France, Sardinia and Naples, and the doge of Venice: the envoy travelled via Russia, but died en route in Berdichev.[20]

Erekle could only wait for the Russians to dictate their terms.

Erekle II. Erekle II was king of Kartli from 1744, and Kakhetia from 1762, until his death in 1798.

Queen Darejan, consort of King Erekle II of Kartli and Kakhetia.

Solomon I, king of Imeretia (ruled 1752–84).

16
The Russian Conquest of Kartli-Kakhetia

✠

On 24 July 1783 General Pavel Potiomkin (cousin of Catherine the Great's favourite Grigori Potiomkin), Crown Prince Ioane and ambassador Garsevan Chavchavadze signed a treaty (*Traktat*)[1] at Georgievsk in the north Caucasus. The *Traktat* had thirteen main articles, four 'separate' articles, and an oath of allegiance to be sworn to Russia by Erekle II and his successors. In article one the king of Kartli and Kakhetia foreswore allegiance to all states except Russia; article two guaranteed that Russia would preserve the integrity of King Erekle's territory. Article three, ominously, required new monarchs of Kartli and Kakhetia to have Russian approval and investiture. More fateful, article four forbade Kartli and Kakhetia to treat with foreign rulers without a Russian minister's or commander's agreement. Article five provided for 'resident' ambassadors. Article six, important to Georgia, specified that an enemy of one state was an enemy of the other; when Russia was at peace with Turkey or Persia, the peace agreement included Kartli and Kakhetia; Erekle and his descendants were perpetual monarchs, and Russia would not interfere in their internal affairs.

Other articles were inequitable: article seven obliged King Erekle and his heirs to support Russia militarily, obey Russian imperial servants, and promote officers and officials for devotion to Russia; article eight subordinated the Catholicos-patriarch to the Russian Synod, ranking eighth after the bishop of Tobolsk, ignoring Georgian autocephaly.

The final articles promised that Kartli's and Kakhetia's nobility, listed by King Erekle, would rank as Russian noblemen, and all freemen of Kartli and Kakhetia could enter, inhabit and leave Russia freely. Released prisoners of war could return home, if their ransom and expenses were paid. Merchants could trade freely in both countries. The treaty would be ratified within six months.

'Separate' (that is, secret) articles appointed Russia as arbiter between Kings Erekle II and Solomon I, promised Tbilisi Russian infantry and four

cannon, and, in any Transcaucasian war, put Russia in command. The last secret article was the bait: Russia would have historically Georgian territory restored to Kartli and Kakhetia.

The *Traktat* was conceived by King Erekle's young 'vice-chancellor', Solomon Leonidze. Grandson of a Lezgi raider, son of a Kakhetian clergyman, son-in-law of the duke of Ksani, he was a brilliant linguist and speechwriter. The details, however, were devised by Grigori Potiomkin: the *Traktat*, although figuratively torn up by Russia in 1801, was the deadliest document any Georgian king signed. Many Georgians saw the *Traktat* as a greater infringement of sovereignty than even the shah's suzerainty. Prohibiting independent foreign policy, when getting consent or help from across Caucasus took months, left Erekle vulnerable to Ottoman or Persian attack; the implied Church union threatened Georgian autocephaly. Promises of military assistance, given the state of the Caucasian passes, were vacuous. King Erekle knew the danger: he suffered recriminations for collaborating with Russia in the 1770s, when (as he informed Count Panin) he fell victim to 'Turkish snakes, Persian lions and Lezgi wolves'.[2] He knew how Catherine had divided Poland. But he, Garsevan Chavchavadze and Solomon Leonidze thought the *Traktat* their sole option: Russia was relentlessly conquering the Caucasus, the Black Sea and the Caspian. Kartli and Kakhetia had to side with the victors; moreover, Russia was Georgia's door into Europe.

In 1783 Catherine had not yet resolved either to protect or to destroy Erekle's sovereignty: her objective, while Persia was impotent and Turkey bound by the 1774 treaty, was to enlist Kartli and Kakhetia in her and Austria's 'Greek Project' to push the Ottomans back into Anatolia. Only Ottoman sensitivity stopped the *Traktat* including Imeretia, too.

At first the *Traktat* seemed fruitful: in November 1783 Fat'h Ali Khan handed over to Russia Aleksandre Bakaris-dze, Erekle's rival. In January 1784 two Russian regiments entered Tbilisi to the sound of 101 salvos and church bells; the treaty was ratified, and a list of Georgia's nobles submitted. Pavel Potiomkin invited Erekle to push his borders to the Caspian, and in September 1784 personally inspected this future 'theatre of war'. England and France, like Turkey and Iran, were alarmed by Russia's moves, yet the reaction was muted. The Turks warned Erekle to keep the Russians out of Akhaltsikhe, and began recruiting Lezgi to deter them. The Lezgi in Char-Belakani (southeast of Kakhetia) and other Dagestanis now saw Kartli, Kakhetia and Russia as the enemy and escalated depredations.

King Solomon I's death in June 1784 ended Imeretia's new stability. Erekle's grandson Davit Archilis-dze was an infant, and the throne went temporarily to Davit Giorgis-dze, who had lived in Kartli, but not at Erekle's court. Erekle asked the Russian resident, Colonel Burnashov, to

make Davit Giorgis-dze swear to vacate the throne in 1789 when Erekle's grandson Davit came of age, and to grant the future king his crown lands. Davit Giorgis-dze's tenure was shaky: he had to bribe nobles, cede borderlands to Mingrelia, and suppress peasants who were killing his tax-extorting prefects. He restored the duchy of Racha and made his nephew duke. To Erekle's annoyance, Davit married his widowed mother-in-law to the son of Giorgi Gurieli, and gave a generous dowry in territory. Davit's attempts to maintain Solomon I's policies irritated Turkey: the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe, told to recognize Kaikhosro Abashidze as king of Imeretia and help him kill Davit, sent an army to the border and fortified Sukhumi, Poti and Batumi. Colonel Burnashov urged Davit to attack the Turks, but he refused to let Imeretians become Russian cannon fodder.

In September 1784 Davit sent Catholicos Maksime to Russia, begging for protection against internal and external enemies, but Russian diplomats in Istanbul could not stop the Turks supporting Kaikhosro Abashidze. The Ottomans retreated only when Erekle and the Russians seemed about to rescue Davit. In December the coast was blockaded; Katsia Dadiani sent pleas for help to St Petersburg. The Turks desisted, but Omar Khan's Dagestanis crossed Kartli and ravaged lower Imeretia. Finally, in October 1785 the Russians protested forcefully, the Turks abandoned Kaikhosro Abashidze, and Davit Giorgis-dze appeased some enemies and sent others fleeing to Akhaltsikhe. In January 1786 Lezgi and Turkish invaders were burnt to death in their forts: even so, Omar Khan threatened a new invasion if Davit did not return the Lezgi corpses, horses and weapons. Starving Imeretian peasants revolted again in July 1786.

In July 1787 Davit sent the poet Besiki Gabashvili, ostensibly to negotiate with the Russians (Besiki was rumoured to be the lover of Ana Qaplanishvili, Davit's queen). Besiki lingered in the Ukraine until 1789, forbidden to proceed to St Petersburg.[3] In August 1787 war broke out, Turkey invaded Imeretia. Davit had to surrender, for Erekle, despite the *Traktat,* had concluded a non-aggression pact with Turkey, and Russia did nothing. In 1788 Davit fought a new Dadiani, Grigol, who was helped by Erekle to win. Russia was about to declare war on Turkey, but did nothing for Davit except to demand that the new Paşa of Akhaltsikhe leave him and Erekle in peace. Desperate, in 1789 Davit ceded Imeretia's throne to Erekle's grandchild, who renamed himself Solomon II; the two kings concluded a mutual assistance pact very like the *Traktat*. In 1791 Anton Catholicos, Erekle's brother, pacified Imeretia: Davit Giorgis-dze accepted crown-prince status (later giving Solomon II his son Konstantine as a hostage).

Russians helped Erekle capture 600 Lezgi near Surami in March 1785, but the Chechens, and a Turkish-backed jihad threatening all the

highlands, were their priority. The Dagestanis moved too quickly for Erekle's artillery: instead, he paid Omar Khan annual tribute of 5,000 roubles, raised by a new tax called *saleko* (Lezgi money). (Pavel Potiomkin also bribed Omar Khan with 4,000 roubles to leave intact Kartli's copper mines, which Russian soldiers were guarding.) The *saleko* and the *saruso* (30,000 roubles annually to feed Russian troops) beggared the peasantry. In 1786 Kakhetian nobles sought military help from Erekle to suppress peasant revolts.

In 1785 the Russian resident, Colonel Burnashov, reported that Erekle's realm was hopeless: its roads were dangerous for trade, its population hid from raiders, tax collectors and recruitment officers. Muslim khanates like Ganja, hitherto Erekle's vassals, now gravitated to the Ottomans. Even Christian Armenians feared the consequences of Russian protection. The Georgian regular army that Crown Prince Levan had built crumbled after Levan's death in 1781; Erekle's pleas for more Russian troops were ignored. The expense of fighting Dagestan and the khanates, especially under Russian command, undermined the economy. Worse, when Russo–Turkish war broke out in 1787, in breach of the *Traktat*, Colonel Burnashov withdrew his troops from Kartli to combat Sheikh Mansur's jihad in Chechnya. Erekle was left defenceless. Tsar Peter's betrayal of Vakhtang VI in 1724 was repeated. Again, Turkey demanded that Russia renounce suzerainty over eastern Georgia. Russia, needing to keep the Crimea, not Transcaucasia, told Erekle to deal with his hostile neighbours on his own.

Erekle complained to General Potiomkin that he had become 'the laughing stock of all our enemies'; he wondered if the *Traktat* had expired. His adviser Solomon Leonidze and son-in-law General Davit Orbeliani advised mending relations with Turkey and Iran. The Iranian warlord Agha Mohammed Khan (who would in 1794 become shah) seemed amenable: he wanted Russia to recognize his claims to be shah. Erekle hastily made peace with the Ottomans, although they at first asked him to break with Russia, cede Armenia, and send two sons as hostages. Some Ottoman diplomats recommended wooing, not threatening Erekle if Turkey was to keep Russia out of Transcaucasia.[4] Turkey, focused on fighting the Egyptian Mamelukes, wanted peace in the east. Erekle also allied himself to Fat'h Ali Shah of Persia, which provoked attacks from Omar Khan of Dagestan. But realignment bought Erekle time.

Süleyman Paşa of Çıldır, a descendant of Samtskhe's Georgian atabags, reached out to King Erekle. Süleyman found the Lezgi, whom he sheltered when they crossed from the north, expensive and unruly when peace between Turkey and Russia obliged him to restrain them (he feared dismissal if he let them provoke Russia). A Lezgian mounted mercenary cost five silver roubles a month, with unrestricted looting rights: they had forest

tracks taking them across Kartli unseen from Akhaltsikhe to Dagestan. In September 1786 Erekle promised to stop more Russian soldiers entering Transcaucasia, and Süleyman promised that no Ottoman forces would cross the border. (This entente lasted until 1791: Süleyman's successor Ishak Paşa borrowed Christian soldiers from Erekle II to repress the Lezgi, horrifying Çıldır Muslims by using Christians against Muslims.) Erekle's promises were a manoeuvre; his pact with the Turks breached the *Traktat*, which Erekle justified by the lack of Russian support.

Many nobles blamed Erekle for his hasty Russian alliance. Erekle's letters in August 1786 to Garsevan Chavchavadze, his ambassador in St Petersburg, complain: 'to whom should I turn to and declare my grief – if I go to the Ottomans, will they help me; if I go to the *kizilbash*, will they pity me; if I go to the Dagestanis, will they receive me?'[5] In December, to counter opposition, he called a council with Crown Prince Giorgi and the elderly Catholicos Anton I: envoys were sent to Akhaltsikhe and to Isfahan (the Russians were told that the envoy to Isfahan was merely visiting relatives).

Akhaltsikhe's tolerance encouraged Erekle and his grandson Solomon II to consider reunification: the bishops of Kutaisi and Gelati, with delegates from Guria, Mingrelia and Imeretia, implored Erekle to unite Georgia. Erekle's council of 1789 voted for immediate unification; Erekle's heir Giorgi eloquently evoked the dangers of disunity. But Erekle's second wife Darejan disliked her stepson Giorgi; she wanted her daughter's son, Solomon II, to rule Imeretia in his own right. Erekle tended to yield to Darejan and her clique: Imeretia and Kartli-Kakhetia remained separate, even though in 1790 Solomon Leonidze drafted a *Traktat* between Imeretia and Kartli-Kakhetia. Erekle preferred fighting for territory in Azerbaijan to wrangling over politics.

In 1789 peasants, impoverished by taxes and war, rose up, demanding a new king and an end to the extortion by Erekle's numerous offspring of wheat, cows and wine. All that Russia offered in 1789 was 1,000 tonnes of iron, 25 tonnes of lead and 50 tonnes of tin for Erekle to sell, in order to ransom men captured by Dagestanis.

The 1791 Russo–Turkish peace treaty, once again, betrayed Georgia. Catherine even offered to leave Transcaucasia if Turkey would recognize Russia just as protector of Christians. At Iași (on the Russian–Ottoman border) Besiki Gabashvili pleaded Solomon II's cause, but died of fever before he extracted concessions. (Grigori Potiomkin died shortly afterwards.) Russia kept the Crimea and the left bank of the Dnestr. The *Traktat* was not mentioned; Imeretia remained under Ottoman suzerainty.

That year Erekle repeated Davit the Builder's mistake: at Darejan's insistence he signed a testament, requiring his eldest son Giorgi to pass the throne not to Giorgi's offspring Davit, but to Iulon, eldest son by Erekle's

second marriage, if Iulon 'proved worthy'. Now Erekle's situation worsened: Agha Mohammed Khan became shah, and sought Erekle's territory, not his friendship. The Ottomans, for the first time in four centuries, recognized Iran's rights over Kartli and Kakhetia. The Russian general Gudovich warned Erekle in 1792 that he would receive only diplomatic support against any Iranian onslaught. The Turks sensed Georgia's weakness, encouraging their fellow Sunnis in Dagestan and the Karabagh to attack Erekle. Catherine snubbed the Georgian ambassador until 1794. By then Agha Mohammed Khan was openly preparing to invade: Erekle's plea for 3,000 Russian troops was ignored, even though he had repaired the highway over the Caucasus. In June 1795 Agha Mohammed Khan fought Crown Prince Aleksandre in Karabagh; Armenian refugees flooded Kartli. In August the khan crossed the Araxes with 70,000 men and, abandoning a siege of Erevan, headed for Georgia.

In September 1795 Erekle received Agha Mohammed Khan's ultimatum:

> Your Highness knows that for the past 100 generations you have been subject to Iran; now we deign to say with amazement that you have attached yourselves to the Russians, who have no other business than trade with Iran . . . Last year you forced me to destroy a number of Georgians, although we had no desire at all for our subjects to perish by our own hand . . . It is now our great will that you, an intelligent man, abandon such things . . . and break relations with the Russians. If you do not carry out this order, then we shall shortly carry out a campaign against Georgia, we will shed both Georgian and Russian blood and out of it will create rivers as big as the Kura . . .[6]

His advisers divided, Erekle ignored the ultimatum, but sent couriers and appeals to St Petersburg. General Gudovich sat in Georgievsk, instructed to avoid 'expense and fuss', accepting presents from Agha Mohammed Khan, while Erekle, with Solomon II and some Imeretians, went south to head off the Iranians. They came too late: the Armenian Catholicos had paid the khan 100,000 roubles for peace; half the Iranian army was about to attack 5,000 Georgians. For a while, the Georgians held up the Iranians outside Tbilisi. All but one of Erekle's scouts were killed, but the Iranians were lured into the Kura gorge. Here Crown Prince Davit's artillery destroyed the vanguard, but Crown Prince Giorgi sent only half his 4,000 Kakhetians. On 11 September the Iranians, realizing how few their enemies were, attacked on all sides in the morning fog. Of Solomon's 4,000 Imeretians, just 300 fought; the others looted their way home. The Iranians lost 13,000 men, a third of their force; the Georgians lost 4,000, virtually

their whole army. 300 highlanders from the Aragvi were massacred, and so was Georgia's artillery commander. Erekle, at the age of 75, hacking down enemy infantry from his horse, was rescued by his grandson Ioane. That day Tbilisi burned; those who had not fled were slaughtered or enslaved (the merchants had three days earlier loaded their wares onto ox-carts and left). Fifty years' work building schools, libraries, a printing press, military and civic institutions was undone in three days; churches and palaces were desecrated and demolished; 20,000 bodies littered the streets; survivors died of epidemics and hunger. The royal regalia were stolen. Some 4,000 Iranians pursued the survivors of Erekle's army up the Aragvi valley, and were stopped only by 300 ferocious Khevsur warriors. Erekle recruited more highlanders, asked his son Giorgi for a few hundred Kakhetians and attempted to parley, but the khan had gone back to Tbilisi and on 21 September left, taking 16,000 prisoners. King Erekle fell into a depression: for some time he sat in an old sheepskin, his face to the wall, in a highland fortress, and then settled in Telavi, unable to bear the sight of Tbilisi destroyed. He wrote bitter reproaches to General Gudovich.

Russian prestige was badly damaged: an Iranian warlord had reduced their vassal kingdom to rubble in a matter of days. Erekle's contemporaries, like later historians, suspected that Catherine deliberately abandoned Erekle, just as Stalin, 150 years later, would let the Nazis crush the Warsaw uprising, making it all the more easy to annexe a prostrate country. Only in December did two Russian battalions cross the Daryal Pass; Agha Mohammed Khan was now far away, quelling rebels in Khorasan; Russian and Georgian troops easily reached the Caspian and retook Ganja. On 6 November 1796 Catherine the Great died. Her estranged son Paul immediately reversed all her decisions. Erekle was abandoned again, and General Gudovich was told to treat him merely as 'a potential enemy of our enemies'. Garsevan Chavchavadze's warnings that Agha Mohammed Khan might return delayed the Russian withdrawal, but the Iranians regained Erevan and Karabagh unopposed. On 6 June 1797 Agha Mohammed Khan was murdered, by Sadeq-Andrea, an aide of Georgian origin whom he had threatened to execute, and Erekle was able to recoup some losses. But in autumn the Russians withdrew troops and financial support and, insisting on literal observance of the *Traktat*, left Erekle politically and militarily paralysed.

Kartli-Kakhetia was no longer viable: its population had fallen by half, to some 200,000.[7] There were too few peasants to feed a top-heavy royal family and nobility, let alone an army big enough to defend the territory. International trade dried up. On 11 January 1798 Erekle died. His son, Giorgi XII, was indecisive and ill with gout. He was, his son-in-law said, 'a man who devoted no more than three hours a day to affairs of state, and the rest of the time prayed, or ate and drank until he vomited or fell asleep'.[8]

Theodore Horschelt, *Viceroy Prince Aleksandr Bariatinsky taking Shamil captive at Hunib in 1859*. Bariatinsky is seated, hands on knees; Shamil stands facing him.

The forceful members of the royal family, Giorgi's stepmother Queen Darejan and step-brothers Iulon, Parnaoz and Aleksandre, were sidelined – the Russians had removed Iulon to Russia to guarantee Georgian loyalty. Had Giorgi been an effective king, and had Erekle not muddied the succession, Kartli-Kakhetia might have revived. Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1799 had reconciled Turkey and Russia, and Imeretia and Akhaltsikhe might have merged with Kartli-Kakhetia into a viable state.

Instead, Giorgi XII concentrated on annulling Erekle's will and declaring his own son Davit, an even more ineffectual man, heir to the throne: Tsar Paul agreed to this change in April 1799, but most of the royal family were furious. Kartli was split between those loyal to Davit, those loyal to Iulon, those (particularly Armenian merchants) who wanted full union with Russia and abolition of the Bagratid monarchy, and those who wanted to break with Russia and resume traditional ties to Iran.

Tsar Paul made discussion irrelevant: he sent in November 1799 a regiment of Jäger and an 'adviser', Piotr Ivanovich Kovalensky, to Tbilisi. The sun shone as 10,000 citizens of Tbilisi, the women in white lining rooftops and balconies, watched their 'liberators' enter the city, cannons firing, church bells ringing. Villages in Kakhetia vied to billet Russian soldiers. Decades of raids and war, they thought, were over.

Imeretia had been spared foreign invasion, but the 1790s brought little relief. Solomon II battled with his former regent Davit Giorgis-dze and

with Grigol Dadiani. By capturing Davit's wife Ana and son Konstantine, Solomon made the ex-regent swear loyalty: Konstantine was incarcerated, and Ana escaped murder only by fleeing through forests into Kartli, to be saved by Russian grenadiers at Surami. (Ana was sent to St Petersburg; only in 1804 could Tsar Alexander make Solomon release Konstantine.) In January 1795 Davit died in Akhaltsikhe, and Solomon II replaced the Dadiani with his brother Manuchar. New pretenders then emerged: Giorgi, Solomon I's illegitimate grandson, married to a Gurian princess, the bishop of Gelati's niece, was backed by the deposed Grigol Dadiani. Quarrels between Mingrelian, Gurian and Imeretian factions drove many weary nobles to ask Russia to annexe all western Georgia. Grigol Dadiani espoused Russophilia to make the Russians protect him from Solomon II, and Catherine the Great awarded him an Alexander Nevsky medal. Equally Russophile, Kaikhosro, Guria's regent, summoned joint lay and Church councils, threatened slave traders with death and dispossessed Turcophiles of their castles – once sending a recalcitrant noble's foster-father to lure him out so that he could be shot dead.[9] Russia coveted Mingrelia's and Guria's ports, still garrisoned by Ottomans and barred to outsiders. But, wary of Turkish reaction, Russia sent only a discreet agent to gauge western Georgia's mood.

Russia gained popularity in Kartli when a joint force routed Omar Khan's Dagestanis in November 1800. That month the tsar sent General Karl Fiodorovich Knorring who, portly and affable like Giorgi, established himself as the king's friend and executive. Erekle's adviser Solomon Leonidze, now insisting that the *Traktat* be honoured, was sidelined. Giorgi behaved like a suppliant, asking the tsar for an annual subsidy and 30,000 serfs, with pensions and estates in Russia for his stepbrothers, demanding merely the Bagratids' rights as titular monarchs. Solomon II, aghast at his uncle's betrayal of their posterity's birthright, complained: 'It's my royal house, too.'

On 28 December 1800, despite medicines from Russia and the ministrations of a Dr Hirzius, Giorgi died of angina. His last words, according to Knorring's interpreter, confided his country to Russia; according to Giorgi's confessors, Giorgi was insisting his son Davit be crowned king.[10] Without informing Giorgi's ambassadors, the tsar had prepared a manifesto that on Giorgi XII's death no heir would be crowned, and that Kartli-Kakhetia would be administered by Russia. Paul hoped that the document would reach Tbilisi in time for Giorgi to give his assent. Knorring was afraid to announce the abolition of the kingdom before the crown princes were forewarned and Russian reinforcements could cross the snowbound Daryal Pass. Major General Ivan Lazarev, however, took the bull by the horns: on 29 December he summoned the nobility to Sioni cathedral to hear the Russian version of Giorgi XII's dying wishes. Solomon Leonidze

contradicted the interpreter, shouting that Lazarev was 'congratulating King Davit on his accession'. Leonidze was arrested, but escaped to Imeretia to warn Solomon II.

On 8 January 1801 two Kartlian ambassadors returned from Russia and declared Davit king 'subject to the tsar's confirmation'. Davit sent them back to Russia for the tsar's investiture, but the annexation went ahead. By 18 January Kartli-Kakhetia was a Russian *gubernia* (province); on 11 March General Knorring became its governor-general, and issued secret instructions to deport all male and many female Bagrations to Russia. (They numbered more than 80, and their transportation had to be discreetly planned.) Giorgi XII's crown and sceptre were locked up in Mtskheta (later deposited in Moscow's Kremlin), his widow Queen Mariam keeping only his sword and mantle.

Knorring's appointment coincided with Tsar Paul's murder, but the new tsar, Alexander I, was just as adamant about abolishing Kartli-Kakhetia, even though two ministers, Counts Vorontsov and Kochubei, doubted the necessity or legality of a unilateral 'agreed' annexation. Knorring returned to Tbilisi, deposed the uncrowned Davit and made General Lazarev provisional governor. In September, when sufficient troops had arrived to ensure security, Alexander I's manifest was read out:

> Not for increasing Our strength, not for greed, not for the extension of Our borders . . . do We take upon Ourselves the burden of governing the Georgian kingdom; dignity, honour and humanity alone impose on Us the sacred duty, having listened to the pleas of the suffering, in order to deflect their griefs, to institute in Georgia a government which might establish justice, security of the person and of property . . .[11]

Georgia's ambassadors protested at 'being stripped of respect and trust'; they asked at least for Georgians, not Russians, to govern the province. On the last Wednesday of Lent, 12 April 1802, the manifest was read to the nobility in Sioni cathedral; the following Saturday, surrounded by heavily armed Russians, the nobility swore allegiance to the tsar before the all-night Easter liturgy began.

Both dowager queens – Erekle's Darejan and Giorgi's Mariam – protested; General Lazarev proceeded regardless, arresting dissident princes Machabeli and Amilakhvari. Lazarev was instructed to step up conversion of non-Christian highlanders, pursue campaigns to link Tbilisi to the Black Sea at Poti and the Caspian at Baku, repopulate the country by settling Russians and Armenians, and revive the economy, generating revenue to make the new province self-sufficient and able to afford its army of occupation.

A 'government' was formed, with Knorring as chief commander for all Transcaucasian affairs, Kovalensky as 'first minister', and a few Georgians as advisers and translators: it had four *ekspeditsii* (departments) – executive, civil, criminal and financial. The province was divided into five districts with police officials (the notorious *kapitan-ispravnik*) and rudimentary courts, with separate areas for Armenians and Azeris. Russian was now the sole language of law and administration, although 95 per cent of the population understood not a word (Vakhtang VI's 1724 legal code, however, would still apply to civil matters and minor crimes, despite the absence of a Russian translation). The landed gentry lost their lucrative rights to hereditary posts, such as the *mouravi* (prefect) and some rights over their serfs. Knorring then left for Georgievsk, leaving General Lazarev and Kovalensky to mismanage their new fief. As the non-king Davit put it, Georgia was now run by four rogues and an idiot.[12]

Lazarev and Kovalensky were overwhelmed. Lazarev caught scabies and declared he would take any army posting other than Tbilisi. The Bagratids openly rebelled. The dowager queens were left without income or servants. Queen Darejan blamed Knorring for the sacking of Tbilisi in 1795, her stepson Giorgi for reducing her allowances and his son Davit for stopping them. She mobilized her six sons Iulon, Vakhtang, Catholicos Anton II, Mirian, Aleksandre and Parnaoz. Mirian was a loyal Russian officer, but Iulon, Vakhtang and Parnaoz prepared for guerrilla warfare to insist on the *Traktat* being honoured and Iulon being crowned. Aleksandre, the most dangerous of Erekle's offspring, fled first to Kars and then to Iran in June 1800. Declared a traitor to be taken dead or alive, he began thirty years of resistance. Given the Georgian Church's prestige, and Russia's determination to abolish it, of all Erekle's sons Catholicos Anton II presented the greatest obstacle. It took ten years to fabricate allegations of misappropriating Church lands before he could be deported to Nizhni Novgorod. Dowager Queen Darejan (with her stepson Giorgi's consent) was under guard to stop her and three of her sons going to the country. Nevertheless, Knorring failed to stop the 'treasonous' correspondence of Darejan and her sons with King Solomon II of Imeretia and various Azeri and Iranian emirs.

The Bagratids' family quarrels lost them popularity. The uncrowned king Davit's supposedly grasping Armenian wife Elene was disliked. Some crown princes, notably Mirian and Ioane, were loyal Russian officers. Iulon and Parnaoz actually attacked their half-brother Davit's supporters, ravaging their Ossetian lands. Giorgi XII's young children by his second wife were no threat or asset to anyone.

Tbilisi's merchants also protested: they refused to sell the Russians supplies below cost price, and gave poor rates in Georgian silver abaza for Russian roubles, even gold chervontsy (Dutch-style ducats worth four to

five roubles used by the Russian army abroad). Knorring and Kovalensky were frustrated by a nobility that had no concept of public service, a peasantry that grew only enough for subsistence and for taxation and preferred paupery to work. General Lazarev and Knorring corresponded in German when they feared letters might be intercepted: they privately dismissed Georgians as *die hiesigen Dummkopfe* ('the local idiots').[13] A census would have caused an uprising: they merely guessed the population of Kartli and Kakhetia in 1802 at 160,000, capable of mustering only 20,000 soldiers. The state's revenues – just 100,000 roubles from customs and 20,000 from copper mines – were far below the costs of buying pensions and estates for the Bagratids in Russia, of ransoming prisoners of war from the Iranians and Dagestanis and of feeding the occupation forces. Kovalensky devised new taxes, for instance on Tbilisi's married men.

Soon, Knorring and Kovalensky became intolerable. They were responsible for abuses and atrocities: soldiers had noses and hands cut off; Russian officials looted the market, beat princes, raped women. Kovalensky infuriated Queen Darejan by wearing his hat and coat in her house and interrupting an interview at noon, declaring it was time for his vodka. He demolished a crown prince's palace to build a wool factory, buying tonnes of wool with state money and pocketing the proceeds from the finished cloth. He stole horses and forage. He speculated in currency, taking advantage of the high price of silver, which made melting down Russian coinage lucrative. Kovalensky's machinations inflated food prices. In November 1802 Tsar Alexander removed him and Knorring. The tsar appointed Georgians: as military governor, General Pavel Tsitsianov, the Russified son of a Tsitsishvili related to Queen Mariam and a companion of Vakhtang VI; as civil governor, Prince Dmitri Orbeliani. (A general, Guliakov, was made military commander.) Before Knorring and Kovalensky left, however, they did some good: in November 1802 Kovalensky gave Tbilisi a two-class school for 45 boys where Georgian and Russian, mathematics, history, civics and catechism would be taught, while Knorring decreed supervision for Tbilisi's 'deserving' poor, clean streets, a slaughterhouse, street lamps and 'rules of good behaviour'.

Tsitsianov, known as 'the wrathful prince', understood the language and the people. But he could not stop abuses, for Russia sent its worst civil servants to Georgia: noblemen were arrested and forced to walk 50 kilometres with ropes round their necks. Tsitsianov was no liberal: in February he complained to St Petersburg that Tbilisi had no executioner who could use the *knut* (cat of nine tails), so convicts were flogged with military *spitzruten* (Georgian adapted from Russian, typically, the verb *rozgva*, 'birching'; from Russian *rozgi*, 'birch canes').[14] Since there was no practicable route to Siberia, convicts sentenced to forced labour went down Kartli's copper mines. Tsitsianov imposed a curfew on Tbilisi, forced households to lodge Russian soldiers and restricted the sale of arsenic.

Tsitsianov began deporting the Bagrations when the Daryal Pass opened in spring 1803. The tsar invited the dowager queens to St Petersburg: both refused. But General Lazarev anticipated no difficulty: '*À mauvais jeu ils font bonne mine*' ('they're making the best of a bad job'). In March 1803 Lazarev and his officers burst into Queen Mariam's bedroom and announced that her carriage was waiting. She seized a dagger from the bedclothes and stabbed Lazarev to death, while her granddaughter Tamar knifed a police officer.[15] Mariam was sent under guard (and forbidden sharp cutlery) not to St Petersburg, but to Belgorod in central Russia. Queen Darejan held out until October and was deported only after she was caught stealing an icon from Anchiskhati church. Prince Vakhtang and the uncrowned King Davit fulminated about the 'sealed metal box' which saw them safely out of Georgia. Prince Iulon bribed Ossetians charged with maintaining the highway to demolish the bridges, but in August 1804 he too was captured and deported. In the highlands north of Tbilisi Parnaoz led 120 Kakhetian guerrillas with Aleksandre, son of the diplomat Garsevan Chavchavadze, their aim being to kill General Tsitsianov.

Parnaoz and his band roamed the hills until October 1804. Iulon was sent to Tula (on a 'wretched' monthly allowance of 1,135 roubles), Parnaoz to Voronezh, until they repented. (In Voronezh Parnaoz went blind translating Jean-Jacques Rousseau.) From Iran Princes Teimuraz and Aleksandre wrote that they would return if a Bagration were crowned king.

Once in Russia, most Bagratids accepted their new life as senators, army officers, landowners or scholars. The uncrowned King Davit sold his Tbilisi properties as government buildings. He blamed Queen Elene for his fall, and asked the Russian Holy Synod for a divorce: he gave many reasons – she was not a virgin on marriage, she fed him beans laced with aphrodisiac, she cast magic spells. Elene wrote a dignified refutation: the divorce was refused. Davit was astounded – his uncle Catholicos Anton II would have granted a divorce on grounds of mutual antipathy.[16] (In 1810 the tsar invited Elene to St Petersburg to join her estranged husband: Davit became a general and scholar, compiling dictionaries, studying Voltaire, and writing sour verse about his demotion from monarch to senator.)

Georgian nobles were compensated with army rank, pensions and awards for loyalty. They at least kept power over their serfs. As in any Russian province, they elected a marshal of the nobility, an honour that fell to the diplomat Garsevan Chavchavadze. Tsitsianov relieved the nobility's pessimism. He had Erekle's printing press, dismantled before the Iranian invasion, reassembled. He opened Tbilisi's first pharmacy and postal service. He reined in police brutality, asked St Petersburg to stop sending corrupt officials, and ordered Vakhtang VI's laws translated for Russian judges.

Russian occupation brought peace, but Dagestanis still raided Tbilisi's suburbs for hostages, and Kurdish soldiers crossed from Akhaltsikhe to kill Cossacks. Dmitri Orbeliani invaded the *paşalık* and made the Paşa surrender 600 Kurds and Lezgi, who were publicly marched through Kartli and Kakhetia. The Lezgi of Char-Belakani were fined 220 bushels of silk cocoons and their lands were annexed. The incorporation of Ganja together with 17,000 prisoners in January 1804 felt as much a Georgian as a Russian victory, as did the subsequent conquest of Azerbaijan, giving Tbilisi access to the Caspian, and cutting Dagestan off from Iran.

Georgia's peasantry, however, felt no relief. The first major rebellion broke out in spring 1804 at a vulnerable place, just west of the Daryal Pass. Local Ossetians protested about grain and meat requisitions by Cossacks: a *kapitan-ispravnik* threw them into pits full of dead cats, whey and excrement. Peasants were then forced to clear the road of snow and rocks: two men were whipped to death, women were yoked to sledges and beaten, others died in avalanches; horses and oxen were worked to death.[17] The Aragvi valley took up arms, killing seventeen of General Volkonsky's troops and occupying forts on the highway: in midsummer 4,000 rebels, Georgians and Ossetians, asked Prince Parnaoz to lead them. On 3 August at the battle of Lomisi, 500 Khevsurs encircled the Russians, who were saved only by Kakhetian noblemen's timidity and General Tsitsianov's return from besieging Erevan. Hundreds of highlanders were bayoneted or captured: eight years passed before anti-Russian violence burst out again.

Kartli-Kakhetia's fate shattered King Solomon II of Imeretia's faith in Russia. Erekle's former vice-chancellor Solomon Leonidze now advised Solomon against concessions. When Tsitsianov reproached Imeretia for helping rebellious Georgian princes escape to Dagestan, Solomon replied that he owed his uncles hospitality, but would urge them to make peace with St Petersburg. Leonidze warned Tsitsianov that Solomon was a fighting man, and would accept Russian protection only if he and his heirs were guaranteed their kingship, if Mingrelia and Guria remained subordinate and he could use the port of Poti.

Tsitsianov, after long wrangling and bribery, made Solomon II release Prince Konstantine, whose father Davit Giorgis-dze Solomon had supplanted; the emaciated prince was given clothes and a thoroughbred and escorted to Tbilisi.[18] In 1804 Tsitsianov showed his teeth: he sent a Russian army into Imeretia, ostensibly to open the road to Mingrelia and the Dadiani, Russia's most trusted vassal. On 25 April Tsitsianov told Solomon to obey military orders and serve Russia on *Traktat* terms; as a reward, Tsar Alexander might restore Lechkhumi, which Imeretia had ceded to Mingrelia. (Tsitsianov reassured the Dadiani that Lechkhumi would remain Mingrelian.) Turkish objections and the lack of any food but millet (which Russian soldiers considered inedible) precluded annexing Imeretia. But

its days were numbered. Solomon II was surrounded by Russian vassals, once Guria declared for Russia (despite the young Prince Mamia's objections). Tsitsianov was represented in Imeretia by a Major Litvinov, whom Solomon II detested.

17
King Solomon's End

✠

If you have solemnly kept your word, why have you taken our city Kutaisi . . . and why do your NCOs keep concubines, maids taken from our princes, in our bedroom . . . why have you smashed in the head of my brother-in-law Davit . . . after Russian troops have been supplied with wood, billets, food, forage, oxen, horses, carts and drink, why do our princes and nobles receive curses instead of thanks?

King Solomon II to General Tormasov, 5 January 1810

Solomon II reacted: he complained to the Ottomans and parleyed with the khan of Ganja; he attacked Mingrelia, taking 400 hostages; he murdered the Dadiani's envoys; he demanded 120,000 roubles which he claimed he had lent to King Erekle; he insisted, in vain, that no Russian troops should enter Kutaisi. Tsitsianov suspected that Solomon II was advised not just by Leonidze but also by a foreign Machiavelli, identified as '*ce démon de prêtre*', Father Nicolas, in fact Nicola di Rutigliano, an Italian Capuchin missionary who was causing his superiors in the Vatican as much concern as the Russian authorities in the Caucasus. As a trainee missionary in Tbilisi, he was reported in 1795 to be 'a hothead, fiery beyond measure' and reluctant to learn the language; in 1801 his Petersburg managers complained of his disobedience and 'scandals' and tried, without success, to have him removed from Georgia; by 1809, he was 'even worse in his contumacy'.[1] Father Nicolas took more interest in Mingrelian and Imeretian politics than religion; he was also western Georgia's only qualified doctor, treating Grigol Dadiani, who rewarded him with 30 Mingrelian villages.

In October 1804 Tsitsianov found a pretext to remove Father Nicolas: Grigol Dadiani's widow Nino wrote that the Dadiani had just died horribly of poisoning and that she and Father Nicolas were the only person from whom he accepted anything by mouth; Grigol's touching deathbed note was attached to Nino's letter. A Russian major feigned illness, summoned Father

Nicolas, and seized him; in vain Nicolas explained that he had not seen the Dadiani for a month before his death.[2] Nino Dadiani later admitted that the Dadiani often fell violently ill after overeating, only to be saved by Father Nicolas's pills, that before dying he ate an entire chicken in oil, called for his pills, but was given opium by mistake. Nevertheless, Father Nicolas was stripped of his vestments and interrogated for a year in Tbilisi. After Nicolas appealed to the tsar, Tsitsianov let him leave for Mingrelia to collect debts from patients: the 'demon priest' resumed his political activities. Tsitsianov probably knew that the Dadiani had been poisoned by his ambitious widow, but Nino Dadiani being pro-Russian, her crimes were overlooked.

Grigol Dadiani's ten-year-old heir Levan was a hostage of Abkhazia's Kelesh Bey, who ignored ultimatums, releasing Levan in April 1805 only after General Rykgof seized his fort, Anaklia. This persuaded some Abkhaz nobles to change orientation from Turkey to Russia. Related by marriage to Dadiani, the Chachba-Shervashidzes favoured Russia, but their people remained Turcophile. Negotiations and threats continued for five years. Christian and Muslim Shervashidzes, parricidal and fratricidal, fought in Sukhumi, hostages were released, and Russia offered Abkhaz princes military ranks and salaries. In the 1806–12 Russo–Turkish war Kelesh Bey played both sides, promising Russia devotion, but corresponding with Turkey and with Talleyrand. He was murdered in May 1808, probably on Nino Dadiani's orders; like the Russians, she wanted her brother-in-law, Kelesh's illegitimate son Sefer Bey Chachba, to rule Abkhazia. The murder was blamed on the legitimate heir, Aslan Bey, but the Abkhaz violently resisted Sefer Bey's installation. In 1810 Russian gunboats stormed Sukhumi, killing 300, driving Aslan Bey to the mountains and 5,000 Abkhaz to Anatolia. Sefer Bey Chachba (now Christian and renamed Giorgi Shervashidze) then took power. (Aslan outlived, and periodically usurped, his half-brother. Even after 1823, when Sefer's grandson Mikhail was installed, Aslan Bey fomented rebellion and Russian retribution.)

For Tsar Alexander, punishing King Solomon II and Aslan Bey Chachba was less important than securing a Black Sea port so that Georgia could be reached from Odessa and then up the rivers Rioni and Qvirila to Kartli's borders. Poti's Turkish garrison, even if bribed, would not let Russian ships unload; the Russians had to use Qulevi, a hamlet five miles north, which they renamed Redut-Kale. Major Litvinov waded through malarial swamps to survey a possible canal from Redut-Kale to the Rioni. In Mingrelia, despite the Dadiani's enthusiasm, Russian troops made the people apprehensive.

In 1805 Russia's defeat at the battle of Austerlitz emboldened Turkey and Iran. Talleyrand was encouraged by reports that the 'Georgian people are more dissatisfied than ever with the Russians' and 'the Russians' shame-

ful depravity has alienated most Georgians . . . impatient to shake off a yoke no less painful than that of the Persians'. France sent General Gardane to Iran, after concluding the Finckenstein Treaty on 4 May 1807, undertaking to restore Georgia to Iran if the shah joined France in war against Russia: 'Article Four. [The Emperor Napoleon] promises all in his power to force Russia to evacuate Georgia and Persian territory'.[3] The Tilsit treaty between France and Russia two months later annulled this plan, and only crown princes Aleksandre and Teimuraz clung, even in 1809, to the prospect of Napoleon liberating Kartli and Kakhetia from Russian rule. Then the British ambassador to Tehran, Sir Harford Jones, promised Georgia to Fat'h Ali Shah if he waged war on Russia. In 1812 British envoys questioned why Persia would reclaim a country that had caused it so much bloodshed: Mirza Bozorg, stroking his beard, replied: 'This is useless, but decorative.'

Tsitsianov now had to repel attacks by Lezgi and Dagestanis on Kakhetia. The Turks waged a lackadaisical war from Akhaltsikhe: a Georgian-Russian force attacked Akhaltsikhe and captured Poti. In May 1805 a small Russian army faced an enormous Iranian force in the Karabagh, which the shah turned into a desert. The Russians won, but during negotiations the khan of Baku's men murdered Tsitsianov. The Russian army resumed fighting, and by autumn 1806 took all the land between Georgia and the Caspian.

General Ivan Gudovich, Tsitsianov's successor, was ineffectual. He lacked civil servants; foreign experts and entrepreneurs died of fevers or went bankrupt. The highlanders' revolt simmered; although the Aragvi Ossetes repented their banditry, the Khevsurs never relented. Peasants rose up in western Kartli: their leaders were brought to Tbilisi in fetters. Even in 1808 the Daryal was passable only under armed escort, and the road collapsed under thousands of troops and artillery. Georgian dissidents required surveillance; 260 of Parnaoz's partisans were arrested in Armenia. True, taxes were reduced and customs dues abolished; the 'Academy for those of Gentle Birth' was expanded to 85 pupils. But Gudovich thought teaching German and Latin superfluous: the Hungarian professor Martini who taught these subjects was made inspector of state orchards.

Imeretia, grimmer than ever, was seething. Solomon II complained that his Kutaisi palace was desecrated by drunken soldiery, and that his adviser Father Nicolas had been abducted. (Nicola de Rutigliano was in fact recalled by the Vatican by 1809: his superiors had let him stay in Georgia only at the request of crown princes Iulon and Parnaoz.[4]) Solomon Leonidze organized a boycott of Russian troops, hoping to starve them. The pretender Giorgi (Solomon I's illegitimate grandson) after nine years in chains, now feared Solomon would execute him. Major Litvinov had Giorgi rescued, then informed Gudovich that he could endure Imeretia no more.

Gudovich, belittling Solomon II as 'unworthy to be called king in a kingdom smaller than a principality', set about dethroning him. Gudovich instructed his officers in German, lest Father Nicolas purloin and translate the letters. The Russians brought to Kutaisi a printing press to print proclamations. Solomon was accused of treating with Turkey, Iran and Dagestan. In February 1809 Solomon proposed to Hussein Khan of Erevan assembling 30,000 men, together with Crown Prince Aleksandre, to capture Tbilisi and unite Georgia under himself.[5] This was the last straw, and made the king a marked man. He avoided roads and towns, moving from one forest lair to another. Litvinov saw him just four times in two years.

The Tilsit treaty brought peace with Turkey, but General Dmitri Orbeliani seized Poti in November 1809, after the Gurians obligingly massacred 9,000 Turks sent by the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. With Abkhazia under Giorgi Shervashidze, Russian ships could now sail from the Crimea to Poti.

In summer 1809 Gudovich ceded command of the Caucasus to the conscientious but irascible General Tormasov. Tormasov abolished his executive department, taking decisions himself, instantly, without paperwork. Plaintiffs were deported if Tormasov rejected their complaint; he declared that 'hot Asiatic blood requires strict swift punishment' and tried suspects by court martial. His civil servants wore swords (Georgian princes were forbidden to carry weapons). Tormasov ordered the nobles to compile genealogies in order to weed out false claims of nobility. But Tormasov was charitable: he helped orphaned schoolboys, sent drunken teachers for rehabilitation, established a seminary to re-educate the Georgian clergy, introduced building laws: houses required foundations and privies, streets required trees. He gave Catholic and Greek immigrants from Turkey asylum and tax exemption, took a census of ethnic minorities, and encouraged the Church to use a printing press.

Tormasov's obsession, however, was rounding up errant Bagratids. Crown Prince Levan, son of Erekle's son Iulon, had turned Muslim and was leading Ossetian rebels: during Ramadan 1810, reduced to eating barley, Levan was to be lured out of hiding by Tormasov's gift of fish. Levan threw the fish to his dogs; Tormasov had Levan's Ossetian hosts arrested, and then sent a Lieutenant Bagration to parley. Levan had the lieutenant tortured and sold to the Circassians. A reward of 2,000 roubles and a pension was offered for Levan's capture (an archdeacon offered to catch him for 400 roubles and an estate). In October 1811 Lezgi stabbed Levan to death in a cornfield. Crown Prince Aleksandre, however, flitted from Dagestan to Persia, recruiting Ossetians and Kakhetians, eluding Tormasov. Only Giorgi XII's son Crown Prince Teimuraz, prompted by his tutor the poet Petre Laradze, left Iran in 1810 for St Petersburg. Teimuraz became a polyglot scholar, historian and academician, and trained the Frenchman

Marie-Félicité Brosset as the world's first foreign kartvelologist. (In literature, Teimuraz was outshone by his elder brother Ioane, a Georgian Laurence Sterne who compiled an exotic half-novel, half-encyclopaedia called *Alms-gathering*.)

Tormasov then engineered Catholicos Anton II's departure: offering him a pension of 2,675 silver roubles, he deported him, Kartli's last Bagration crown prince, to Russia in 1811. Now St Petersburg's Holy Synod and a series of Russian exarchs ruled Georgia's Church. On Sundays, Sioni cathedral services were sung in Russian, for which a school trained choristers. Church silver was melted down and icons whitewashed if they offended Russian conventions. Exarch Varlaam merged the Imeretian and Kartlian Churches, and reduced Kartli's thirteen bishoprics to two, a measure particularly galling because Armenians, Catholics and Muslims remained autonomous.

Tormasov's persecution of Solomon II taught Imeretians to love their king, who now commanded 5,000 men. Intermediaries tried to lure Solomon to Kutaisi; Tormasov and Solomon exchanged letters, each demanding guarantees that the other refused. Solomon knew that the Russians' envoy, Zurab Tsereteli, would win a crown prince's estate if he could trap the king (Tsereteli, however, feared being murdered). Solomon suspected, as the Russo–Turkish war resumed, that he would be punished as a traitor for siding with Prince Aleksandre and the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe.

In January 1810 Tormasov made Imeretian nobles swear allegiance to the tsar, and then gave Solomon three days to surrender. In an unlit room, Tormasov's chief of staff, Pavel Ivanovich Mogilevsky, held midnight talks with Solomon, and then supped alone with Solomon's adviser Leonidze. In March Major-General Simonovich, a Croat in Russian service, formally deposed Solomon and pursued the king, who had sent his queen and property to a fortress and his peasants to the mountains. On 18 March 1810, in a brilliant feat of mountaineering, Simonovich and Major Lisanevich trapped Solomon in the Khani gorge, before the pass leading to Akhaltsikhe. The king and his retinue were brought to Tbilisi, after nearly breaking free into Ossetia, and put under house arrest with strict, but unobtrusive surveillance.

One month later, at two in the morning, Solomon walked past the sentry disguised as a servant, while his own servant occupied his bed. Imeretians had left horses grazing on a field just outside the city bounds, and two dozen Imeretians galloped off with the king, challenged only once, towards Akhaltsikhe, bantering with drunken Cossack frontier guards. Tormasov was in Karabagh during this escape: General Akhverdov, ruler of Kartli-Kakhetia, and the Tbilisi military governor sacked the commandant, sent out a search party, arrested Solomon's queen, Mariam, and sister Maia: every relative of Solomon's was incarcerated first in Poti and then in

Kutaisi where they were less likely to die of fever. (Tsar Alexander was outraged by Solomon's 'disrespect for the monarch's kindnesses', particularly by the fugitive's leaving behind the Order of Alexander Nevsky he had been awarded.) Tormasov court-martialled all those responsible for the escape but himself, and passed draconian sentences on those who had connived at Solomon's escape.[6] (Solomon's servant Tabukashvili and Salamidze, a barber who disguised Solomon, were sentenced by General Rozen to have their limbs hacked off before beheading, but were instead exiled to Siberia; police sergeant Palavandishvili, who brought the horses for the escape, was discharged to 'freedom and God's mercy', but Tormasov amended this to 'death by firing squad'.) On 30 December 1810, at 10 a.m., three Georgian police sergeants and an Armenian constable were led out before a crowd on the left bank of the Kura and executed by firing squad.[7]

In Akhaltsikhe King Solomon II conferred with his brother-in-law Malkhaz Andronikashvili and with Leonidze. Solomon appealed to the sultan, to the shah, and to Napoleon as 'universal arbiter'. (In 1799 Napoleon adopted Rostom, an Egyptian officer, originally a slave from Tbilisi, and might therefore sympathize.) Solomon travelled to Erevan to collaborate with Crown Prince Aleksandre. Their campaign ranged from negotiating (offering to shed their blood for Russia if they could be kings) to armed incursions into Imeretia. Russia was at war with both Turkey and Iran; Solomon's activity was particularly unwelcome. (Solomon's appeals to potential allies, like the bishops of Imeretia, fell on stony ground, for every letter had a postscript, 'Send me a little wine and vodka'.) Solomon dared not use Turkish troops, lest he alienate his own people, but he started a conflagration. Even with Gurian and Mingrelian backing, Russian troops suffered disastrous encounters. General Tormasov's only hostages, apart from the rescued Konstantine, official heir to Imeretia's throne, were Leonidze's children: his son attended school in Tbilisi; his daughter was married to a Kartlian noble. The boy was put under surveillance, and the daughter's lands confiscated.

In August 1811, however, Leonidze died. Solomon II fought on. So adamant was Tormasov that he hired Akhaltsikhe's Lezgi against the Imeretian rebels; when they failed, Tush, Khevsurs and Pshavs were brought through Ossetia, although Tormasov was warned that highlanders might die in Imeretia's summer heat. To avoid Konstantine becoming the focus of more rebellions, Tsar Alexander ordered him evacuated to Russia. (As a precaution, Konstantine was given the laziest horse available and allowed to rest only at military posts.) By autumn 1810 Solomon's family was under guard in Tbilisi or on the road to Russia; only Solomon I's aged widow Darejan was spared these humiliations.

Imeretia was in agony: in 1811 alone, famine after bad harvests, blockades and warfare killed 30,000. Abkhazia, too, lost half its population

to hunger. Bubonic plague, with 75 per cent mortality, spread from Akhaltsikhe, as it always did when the Ottoman border was breached, killing over 4,000 Imeretians and Russians. The war won approval in Kartli and Kakhetia, because Russia, by reconquering Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki, was restoring a province lost for two centuries. But Tbilisi's citizens were perturbed by Imeretian refugees dying in the street. Ignoring the death of half the population and desperation of the living, Tormasov told Imeretians that their suffering was 'the wrath of God for their treachery'.[8] He gave Imeretia a 'Provisional Government', annulling old laws, merging the administration with Guria's and Mingrelia's (the principalities sent two delegates to this provisional government). Courts martial punished those selling Christians as slaves (Imeretian nobles then began mortgaging their serfs to the Jews of Kutaisi and Zugdidi). Tormasov planned to log Imeretia's hardwood forests for Russian shipbuilding. Kutaisi's clergy were induced to open a school, for which Tormasov ordered 40 copies in Russian of *The Duties of a Man and Citizen*.

By February 1811, 2,000 men were still searching for Solomon II, and Tormasov complained that no Imeretian was willing to assassinate Solomon. He gave Imeretian nobles who had fled to fight with Solomon four months to return or lose their lands. Tormasov then announced that Imeretia was sufficiently pacified to be taxed. He dismissed Imeretians' complaints of the scarcity and price of food. Attempts to ship 1,000 tonnes of grain from Russia began too late: by autumn the Black Sea was too stormy for shipping. A sum of 10,000 roubles was allotted instead, but while war, however desultory, continued, there was no way of importing grain into Imeretia.

Solomon II's escape from Tbilisi, the resulting Imeretian rebellion and famine, diverting thousands of soldiers fighting the Turks in order to capture the defiant king, everything disgraced Tormasov in the tsar's eyes.

In October 1811 Tormasov was replaced by General Rtishchev and the urbane Marquis de Paulucci. Paulucci, an Italian who switched from Austria to Russia in 1807, performed so brilliantly that he, too, was removed by Alexander I in March 1812, for a yet more 'brilliant post'. While General Simonovich wrestled with Imeretia, Paulucci righted the abuses of Tormasov's regime in Tbilisi. Neither man had much Russian – they communicated in rough-and-ready French – but they were open-minded. Both sympathized with the Catholic Church, whose missionaries were Georgia's only doctors, and organized three parishes and stipends for them. As the Turks made peace with Russia (they were crushed in the Balkans by a russified General Bagration), Paulucci argued that pursuing Solomon II or Crown Prince Aleksandre was pointless, and only increased their self-esteem. Instead, Paulucci collected taxes, requisitioned grain, controlled trade in spirits, imported 30 civil servants from the Ukraine, commissioned

prisons, an arsenal, a magistrate's court, and police headquarters, and increased the number of Georgian and Armenian traders and free peasants. Bubonic plague still spread from the west: 4,000 died in the summer of 1811, and Tbilisi's school shut down as parents evacuated their children; famine also spread from Imeretia, and wheat doubled in price. Paulucci tried to innovate: sesame seed was distributed, glass blowers were sought so that Georgia's wine might be bottled and exported.

Paulucci, too, was harassed by Bagrations: he dealt with the 'immoral' Anastasia, Erekle's middle-aged daughter, by having Exarch Varlaam incarcerate her in a nunnery. Bishop Arsena, used to incriminate Catholicos Anton II, was dismissed for selling Church property. Paulucci's last instructions were to commandeer 32 kilograms of bronze and to erect new tombstones over the royal graves in Mtskheta: Giorgi XII was mendaciously commemorated for 'entrusting his country to the tsar'. But Paulucci despaired of Imeretia, where plague, malaria and other fevers raged unabated, and the population was further depleted when 7,450 fled to Akhaltsikhe. Paulucci told St Petersburg that Imeretia was too small and too expensive to administer as a province, that its people needed swift personal justice of the Asiatic kind, its terrain was impassable, and the neighbourhood of Akhaltsikhe and Solomon II hindered pacification. He encouraged Gurians to cultivate maize; eventually maize replaced millet and fed the population, the Russian army and even an export market (maize had for a century been grown by Cossacks and Ossetians on the Terek: the etymology of the Georgian *simindi* from Greek *semidális* – fine flour – implies that Pontic Greeks brought maize to Guria).[9]

Paulucci's challenge, however, was pacification. The 1811 famine and plague epidemic made grain in Kakhetia costly, but the Russian army paid a pittance for the wheat and barley it took. The peasants went on strike when Paulucci offered only 6 abaza (1 rouble, 20 kopecks) instead of the market price of 5 roubles a load. Soldiers impounded the grain and raped the womenfolk. On 31 January 1812 villagers at Akhmeta routed a punitive detachment; all Kakhetia rose up, capturing Telavi and Sighnaghi. While the noblemen hesitated, the peasant revolt spread to the simmering highlands: the Daryal Pass was threatened by 1,000 Khevsurs, led by an anonymous *khatis-gizhi* (The Madman of the Shrine). Paulucci hurried back from his anti-Iranian campaign on the Caspian. On 1 March 4,000 rebels killed Paulucci's adjutant, and General Vakhtang Orbeliani; they proclaimed a prince Grigol Ioanes-dze as king of Kartli and Kakhetia. Paulucci crushed the rebels, hanging eight ringleaders. He then made concessions, removing the hated *kapitan-ispravnik*, forbidding grain confiscation, and mounted an inquiry into government violence. (Paulucci blamed the rebellion on immoral Russian officials, bestial and fickle natives, intrigues by Bagrations and their Persian backers, a gentry resentful at lost

privileges, excessive forced labour duties, slow Russian justice and abuses in army provisioning.[10]) Kakhetia's forests still swarmed with guerrillas, but Paulucci had ended on a triumphant note. (He later advised Alexander I on combatting Napoleon and then, with taste and genius, rebuilt the city of Riga from the ashes of war.)

When General Rtishchev took over Paulucci's duties, Napoleon was invading Russia, and so was the shah of Iran. Kakhetia's rebels thought Russian troops would be overstretched. Thirty Kakhetian nobles went to Persia to fetch Crown Prince Aleksandre and crown him king. Rtishchev lacked Paulucci's diplomacy; he abolished the Committee of Inquiry, but sent two generals to promise amnesty to rebels who disbanded. While Rtishchev was in Armenia, Aleksandre crossed the Kura with 100 men, claiming a Persian army was in his rear. As Moscow burned, 6,000 rebels cut the Georgian Military Highway; Aleksandre sent men to isolate Tbilisi and keep his route to the mountains open. He won a pitched battle with General Orbeliani at Shilda on 21 September, but lost when Colonel Tikhanovsky came onto the field. Aleksandre's cavalry terrorized Russian infantry and he had better spies. But he had no artillery.

In October 1812 Rtishchev took command, and an army sent by Abbas Mirza, son of Shah Fat'h Ali and Aleksandre's chief supporter, was cut to pieces by the Russians. Aleksandre lost Georgian support, his Lezgi deserted him; only the Khevsurs fought on, even when surrounded in the peaks. In May 1813 Russians killed 700 Khevsurs and destroyed their fort at Shatili and 20 villages. Aleksandre escaped to Dagestan. (Lezgi prisoners were slaughtered or put to work in the mines.)

Rtishchev burned rebel villages, fields and vineyards. Thousands were killed or displaced; 62 nobles and clergy were court-martialled: priests and nuns were incarcerated, men sent to hard labour in Siberia. On 14 January 1813 fourteen peasants, including a 75-year-old woman, were hanged. The Kakhetian population ('fined' 50,000 silver roubles, over 1,000 tonnes of wheat and 500 of barley) was reduced to Imeretia's misery. Collective responsibility was enforced for crimes, thieves were flogged, and the military ruled. A few maverick Kakhetians were trusted, for example Archimandrite Elevteri of Qvareli, who was sold 30 kilograms of gunpowder – he was famous for interrupting morning service to lead his congregation in an attack on Lezgi raiders spotted nearby – and paid 1,000 silver roubles a year.[11]

Rtishchev spent three years negotiating Crown Prince Aleksandre's surrender. Rtishchev's letters alternated reproaches and threats with promises. He offered the Avar khan 6,000 roubles and a back-paid pension, in exchange for Aleksandre, dead or alive. Aleksandre, rightly, was extremely mistrustful and recruited Dagestani bodyguards. Both sides had unacceptable intermediaries: Rtishchev – Father Elevteri, Aleksandre – an

Armenian broker. Rtishchev even wrote to Abbas Mirza, offering to let Iran have Aleksandre if they promised never to let him leave. By May 1816 Rtishchev believed Aleksandre would come out of the mountains and surrender in Kizliar, but the crown prince was plotting to go south. In July 1818, with a retinue of eleven, chatting to Cossacks at the border post, Aleksandre crossed the Kura to Akhaltsikhe and thence to Iran. (General Ermolov put the guard officer under arrest and ordered any non-Georgian or non-Russian implicated hanged on the spot.)

Peace with Turkey allowed Russia only to keep territory it had gained by cunning, rather than force. Akhalkalaki, Poti and Batum were returned to the Ottomans, but Sukhumi, where Christian Shervashidzes had taken power, became a Russian port. Peace rendered Solomon II harmless. The Ottomans no longer supported him, but he stayed in Anatolia, dying of a chest infection in Trabzon on 7 February 1815. (His confessor Father Hilarion moved to Mt Athos, where he was the only Georgian monk, and received no visitors for 30 years.[12]) Rtishchev proved chivalrous: he agreed to accept Solomon's body for the royal mausoleum in Gelati (Solomon was, however, buried in the church of St Gregory in Trabzon; in 1990 he was finally reinterred at Gelati); 60 of Solomon's retinue were allowed to return; Solomon's widow and two sisters lived in comfort in St Petersburg.

Life in Imeretia did not improve. General Simonovich, the best-intentioned of Imeretia's Russian rulers, died of a stroke in 1815. Redut-Kale remained Imeretia's only port: there was little trade, and food remained short. Rtishchev gave the Russian exarch control of Imeretia's churches, but could not reform the administration. His measures were punitive: Jews who gave mortgages against serfs were flogged and sent with their families to Siberia. Boys and girls were still being sold into slavery: a decree requiring all serf sales to have three witnesses did not stop the abuse.

Frustrated, Rtishchev declared that he loved Armenians who owed loyalty only to Russia. He fought robbery by stationing guards along the roads and making landowners compensate anyone robbed on their territory. He did little for Tbilisi's citizens, merely seeking funds for an alms-house and a city hall. Justice was dispensed personally: Rtishchev heard petitions on Wednesdays and Saturdays, giving judgement at the next session. He, too, fought fraud by making noblemen compile family trees. He tried to free Kartli and Kakhetia's strangled finances. The Georgian mint produced small silver coins, but ran out of copper, so that half a million roubles' worth was imported from Russia. In 1814 Rtishchev introduced the Russian paper *assignatsia*, unpopular because these banknotes were worth only a quarter of their face value.

On 4 October 1816 Rtishchev resigned: his final report claims that he found Georgia in a 'dire' situation and left it 'flourishing'. But he blundered, notably by building a port near Poti, 'St Nicolas', where 3,000

Russian soldiers died of fever before it was abandoned. Rtishchev was replaced by Russia's sledgehammer, General Ermolov, who had dreamt of the post for twenty years. Ermolov, a highly educated and 'excessively sober' man, loved order: he weeded out false nobles and appointed a commission to eliminate the contradictions of Vakhtang VI's Code and create a Russian version. Aghast at his empty treasury, he peremptorily asked St Petersburg's minister of Finance for an enormous subsidy. He brought in a new exarch to deal with Church property, rather than doctrines, and opened a Tbilisi seminary. He rebuilt the Georgian Military Highway to resist the floods and rock-falls that washed crucial bridges away every spring, and surveyed a new east–west road. To counter depopulation, Ermolov imported 500 radical Protestant German farmers from Württemberg: these fearless sectarians (who intended to witness the Apocalypse in Jerusalem) came down the Danube from Hungary and trekked overland from Odessa to Georgia, where they received land near Tbilisi. Ermolov wanted them to teach Georgian peasants arable and dairy farming: they soon supplied Tbilisi with Swiss cheeses and German wurst.

Tbilisi still had fewer citizens than in 1794, but Ermolov decided they could afford increased poll tax of four silver roubles. Ermolov deplored the nobles' exploitation of peasants, who paid not just tithes, but also subsidized their lords' guests, funerals, marriages and Easter and Christmas presents, and provided horses and wet nurses; the fees a peasant had to pay his owner for working in town caused a shortage of labour. Ermolov alleviated the shortage of civil servants with generous government grants; Turkish- and Arabic-speaking interpreters were recruited from Kazan. He encouraged production of madder dye and silk thread, subsidizing a Frenchman, Castella, to set up a European spinning mill. (The enterprise was successful, but unprofitable; Castella died, so Ermolov made his widow headmistress of a girls' boarding school.) Merchants were organized into guilds, as in Russia, with tax exemptions, caravanserais and military escorts to the Black Sea. French experts came to improve Kakhetian wine-making, but there was no glass for bottles. Under Ermolov the Tbilisi School for the Genteel expanded to 250 pupils.

Much went wrong. Ermolov found that 'given their limited abilities, there is nobody more conceited and eager for quite unmerited awards, or more ungrateful than Georgian princes'.[13] The Württemberg colonists were intractable: they had outrageously liberal beliefs and sexual morals, could not cope with severe winters, and they were raided by Azeri neighbours and oppressed by Georgian clergy: when Iranian forces attacked, their wives and children had to be ransomed. Their number nevertheless had increased to 2,000 by 1824, and more Protestants were settled.

Ermolov's achievement was remarkable, for he devoted most of his time to fighting a war against both Circassians and Dagestanis. A reputation

for brutality explains his success, and by 1816 there were 30,000 troops in Transcaucasia. But western Georgia was about to explode: Redut-Kale handled just 27 ships in one year, and supplies sent up the Rioni went to feed Russian troops; a grant of 10,000 roubles was not enough to feed the population, even though it was still less than 120,000 (only 1,000 inhabited Kutaisi). The Russian army took what maize and millet could be found and paid little; the nobility was disempowered. Almost no money circulated; taxes on serfs, particularly church serfs, soared; villages once exempt because of paupery were now taxed. Colonel Bernard Rottiers, a Frenchman who served as chief of staff to General Dmitri Orbeliani and brought his wife and children to Georgia in 1811 because he wanted 'to study an entirely new sort of war' in Kakhetia, crossed Imeretia on his way home in 1818: he found Surami, the last stop in Kartli, completely deserted after the plague, and Kutaisi in total ruins, except for the Catholic mission, where plague victims were still being nursed.[14] Mahmud, son of Selim Paşa of Akhaltsikhe, had just kidnapped 39 Gurians, and Rottiers was asked by General Kurnatovsky to negotiate their release when he got to Trabzon. Rebellion was breaking out again. Bishoprics were abolished and junior clergy lost their jobs. Even the 'loyal' Levan Dadiani was corresponding with the Ottomans and with Crown Prince Aleksandre, sending a girl as a present to the Paşa of Akhaltsikhe. (Ermolov told Dadiani to hand over his son to guarantee his fidelity.) Mule-loads of gunpowder and lead shot were reported crossing the mountains from Ottoman territory.

Armed revolt broke out in Racha: officials fled, General Kurnatovsky panicked. Ermolov sent grenadiers and artillery. The Abashidzes nominated a new king (Ivane Abashidze, Solomon I's grandson), so did the Tseretelis, while the nobility decided that Crown Prince Aleksandre should be brought from Persia to rule. The Russians made concessions, abandoning Church reforms and removing the exarch. (The Russian exarch Feofilakt was hated: he needed an escort of 300 men and two cannons to bring him out of Imeretia.) But Ermolov's deputy, General Sysoev, demanded 'repentance' and oaths of loyalty: Kutaisi was fortified, and a civil war between pro-Russian and rebel nobles broke out. Dosite, bishop of Kutaisi, and Ekvtime, bishop of Gelati, former mediators between Solomon II and the Russians, were seized by 100 Jäger and deported (Dosite died on the journey).

In March 1820 Guria rose up. When Colonel Puzyrevsky, authorized to 'exterminate' the Gurian leadership, but pretending merely to survey roads, told Kaikhosro, regent of Guria, to hand over the fugitive pretender Ivane Abashidze and then lashed out with his whip, the Gurians murdered Puzyrevsky and took his retinue hostage. Colonel Zgorelsky with 300 men and artillery retreated, for fear of further ambushes. Ermolov pronounced Kaikhosro a traitor and promised 'terror'; he also seized the wife and children of Vakhtang, son of Davit Giorgis-dze and possible

claimant of the Imeretian throne. (Prince Vakhtang had not been sequestered in St Petersburg with other Bagrations, according to Ermolov, only 'because of his bestial stupidity'.) In April a mass revolt around the monastery of Shemokmedi routed the Russians, killing 33. The Gurians then slaughtered the Russian rearguard, crossed the Rioni and attacked Redut-Kale, with the help of Grigol, brother of the loyal Levan Dadiani. Levan Dadiani handed his brother over to the Russians, but the Gurians and Ivane Abashidze advanced eastwards. General Veliaminov, boasting that he had 'enough troops to exterminate all Imeretia', burned down rebel villages, destroyed orchards and vineyards and hanged prisoners on the spot. The Gurians were forced to produce Puzyrevsky's murderer, who confessed that Kaikhosro Gurieli had ordered the killing. A tomb was built on the site of the murder, and there the killer was made to run the gauntlet until he died.[15] By autumn Ivane Abashidze was in Turkish territory, and all 'traitors' were rounded up, many sent to perish in Siberia. Ermolov noted with satisfaction: 'extreme poverty will be Guria's punishment'.

In 1821 Exarch Feofilakt came back to finish his work. All western Georgia was crushed. A few Imeretians made their way back from Siberia, but were sent back in 1824. The only plans for developing Imeretia came from a Frenchman anxious to export shipbuilding timber: he was forbidden to do so. Fewer ships anchored at Redut-Kale: hopes of Georgia as a transit route for goods to and from Persia faded: instead, Trabzon swarmed with British shipping, and goods went thence to Persia via the Euphrates. Levan Dadiani kept Mingrelia, while his brother Grigol was in Siberia, and his mother Nino in Russia. Kaikhosro Gurieli evaded capture; the young Mamia became prince, only to die in 1826, leaving his mother Sopio and a council of regents nominally in charge of a Russian military district.

Ermolov could not build the roads and bridges that would integrate the country. Nor could he stimulate Kartli's economy: Tbilisi merchants blocked foreign access to the retail market; plans to cultivate cotton, indigo and tobacco gathered dust. The French consul Jacques-François Gamba proposed importing 300 French artisans to plant a million white mulberry trees and develop silk exports: the proposal foundered, as did the French - man Castella's project to import Tibetan wool-bearing goats. Nevertheless, Gamba noted with satisfaction that by 1823 Tbilisi had a good Provençal restaurant and two French bakeries; some palatial gardens were opened to the genteel public, and the ruins of 1795 had finally been cleared; foreign merchants, largely British, used the city for transit between Turkey and Persia.[16]

Ermolov's last task in Georgia was to overcome Ossetian hostility to taxation. Finally they were spared the dues and *corvées* of the Georgian peasant: they paid merely three sheep or silver roubles and did twenty days' ploughing a year for their landowner. In April 1826 Abbas Mirza,

without declaring war, attacked Transcaucasia. Ermolov felt he lacked the means to counterattack: he yielded the city of Ganja without a fight. The new tsar, Nicolas I, found this retreat unforgivable. Ermolov was replaced by General Paskevich, who had long resented playing second fiddle to Ermolov. Paskevich spread rumours that Ermolov had asked the Georgian nobles to petition the tsar to let him stay. In any case, Paskevich proved his merit by driving the Persians out in autumn 1826.

At first, the Georgian nobility sang: 'Easter's coming, nature's reviving / Paskevich has come, with his adjutant "swindling Johnny" [Van'ka-Kain] Korganov / Pity that Ermolov's gone: the people's mood is spoiled'.[17] (Paskevich's adjutant Ivan Korganov, a polyglot Tbilisi Armenian, really was a notorious thief.) Ruthless and semi-literate (secretaries compiled his reports), Paskevich was, however, effective, although he saw to civic affairs only after his underling, General Sipiagin, died. By inflicting irrecoverable defeat on Persia, he had by the Treaty of Türkmenchai secured Armenia and Azerbaijan as provinces of Russian Transcaucasia, and in his equally successful war with Turkey of 1828–9, at the Treaty of Adrianopolis, he gained Akhaltsikhe and the Black Sea ports for Georgia. In Paskevich's term, all Abkhazia and Svanetia came under Russian rule: he had reintegrated Georgia.

Paskevich took unexpected interest in civic improvements: he hired architects for a hospital, an orphanage, a workhouse, a public library and a maternity home for single mothers, and took Church lands for these charitable institutions. He lobbied for a proper water supply, and a wholesale market. He established 40 post stations. He planned to build prisons. Most planned buildings, thanks to lethargy, corruption and chronic shortages of money, land or labour, would be built decades later. Only 80 roubles were subscribed for a public library; prisoners, scattered in ad hoc dungeons for want of a prison, died like flies. Tbilisi's military governor, General Nikolai Sipiagin, however, used Persian POWs to construct European-style buildings, but died of pneumonia in 1828 before he could build hospitals.[18] Paskevich turned the School for the Genteel into a proper *gimnazia* (grammar school), set up schools in five other towns, as well as Georgia's first girls' school and a school teaching carpentry to crown serfs. Water-operated sawmills and flourmills were installed and apprentices trained. He imported 60 kantonists (conscripted military-civic workers) as clerks. The mint produced silver coins; the mines supplied copper. When Sipiagin, following Russian policy, banned all Ashkenazi Jews from Tbilisi, Paskevich annulled the order, pointing out that the city needed tailors and publicans. (Jewish pedlars were, however, returned to their birthplace, and under Russian exarchs the Georgian Church began selling off its Jewish serfs.) The 4,000 to 6,000 Georgian Jews then under Russian rule were excluded from the state's benefits, although they paid the same taxes as Aryans Orthodox Christians.

Georgians encountered anti-Semitism for the first time in 1,500 years, with attacks on Jews in 1819 and 1828. Georgian Jews, unlike Ashkenazi Jews, did not stand out from the rest of the population in physical appearance, dress or language (although they coloured their speech with Hebrew), and while certain names and surnames were recognizably Jewish, these, too, usually ended in *-shvili* or *-dze*. Jews built stone synagogues unopposed, were allowed to own land, acted as witnesses like any Georgian, and in civil cases Georgian kings allowed Jewish law to apply to them. (But, in order to become *aznauri* – 'freemen' – they had to accept baptism. Even so, the surname Uriaqopili, 'former Jew', carried no stigma.[19])

Paskevich subsidized a Russian-language newspaper, the *Tiflis Herald*, which covered the Persian war with due patriotism; sensitive news was printed on separate sheets for Georgian subscribers only. Paskevich grappled with a tangle of Georgian, Russian and Muslim legal codes; he exempted from tax plague victims, highlanders guarding the Military Highway, villagers devastated by army movements, nomads, and the inhabitants of Poti and Redut-Kale.

Paskevich forged contacts with Europe: merchants went to the Leipzig Fair, and goods reached Mingrelia via the Danube and the Black Sea. Georgia's exports, textiles and metalwork, were negligible, but acquiring Akhaltsikhe brought 7,000 Armenian families into the economy. Finally, Paskevich built a bottle factory (to save Russia ten million roubles a year by importing Kakhetian instead of French wine) and model European farms; he lobbied, in vain, for steamboats and a commercial bank. Paskevich was an acclimatizer: he founded Tbilisi's Botanical Gardens and ordered from Europe's botanists plants that might help the Georgian economy: as well as magnolias, camellias and tulip trees, Paskevich was the first to bring in camphor, persimmons, New Zealand flax and, above all, tea bushes.

Paskevich's plans, like his imported trees, often withered. Kakhetian peasants would not produce surpluses: 80,000 produced less than 20,000 tonnes of grain and three million litres of wine; German colonies, hit by Persian invasion and by plague, had to consolidate. An enterprising Frenchman, Morénas, surveyed Imeretia, recommending large-scale clearance to counter the putrid climate, and recommended growing citrus, like the Turks around Poti. Morénas felt that quinine would cure Mingrelia's notorious fevers. Unfortunately, after submitting his report, Morénas died of fever.[20]

Paskevich was tolerant in religion. He would not convert Muslim Ossetians and defended the Khevsurs' right to their pagan shrines. (On conquering Akhaltsikhe, however, he converted the mosque to a church and named it St Nicolas after the tsar.) He was no chauvinist, declaring that he preferred Georgians to Russians, 'because they steal less'. When Aleksandr Griboedov, superb dramatist and disastrous diplomat, was butchered in Tehran, Paskevich had him buried not in Russia, but in Tbilisi, as his

widow, the young Nino Chavchavadze wanted. He let Aleksandr Pushkin accompany his army into Turkey, even though St Petersburg police had ordered strict surveillance of the poet. When the much-feared government inspectors, Mechnikov and Kutaisov, came to inspect Transcaucasia in June 1830, they were horrified by the bureaucracy's corruption and idleness, but could fault Paskevich only for rough justice and missing paperwork: for example, a Persian mullah carrying seditious letters was hanged, first by the feet, then by the neck, in Tbilisi, with no charge, trial or record.

The Caucasus lost Paskevich, like Paulucci, because his brilliance was required elsewhere. Able to fight a war with one hand and administer a country with the other, he was summoned in summer 1831 by Tsar Nicolas I to crush the Polish insurrection.

The tsar took four months to choose Baron Grigori Rozen (a distant relative of a Baron Ivan Rozen who helped pacify Imeretia in 1810). Rozen was personally close to the tsar: Alexander I had been godfather to his children. He brought with him his religious wife, Elizaveta Zubova, and a brood of children. (The two girls, Lidia and Praskovia, took up icon painting; Praskovia eventually became famous as Abbess Mitrofania.) Rozen was compassionate: in the Tbilisi noonday heat, he would go out and personally unbutton his sentries' tunics. He did as government inspectors Mechnikov and Kutaisov advised, although his government camped in half-ruined buildings, his officials were unfit, from fevers or moral corruption, and he was waylaid with petitions: false nobility claims (those not on King Erekle's list needed attestation from twelve princes); protests from King Erekle's descendants who lost the title of tsarevich (crown prince) and were now to be known as *kniaz'* (ordinary prince); and complaints from penurious clergy whose bishops lived in luxury.

Rozen tried to win popularity: the *Tbilisi Herald* had editions in Azeri and in Farsi. Once Turkey and Persia foreswore war, the population and economy recovered. Georgian serfs' burdens were reduced to Russian levels: Georgian serfs had some privileges – for instance, returning prisoners of war were emancipated. Some Jews and Russian schismatics were allowed to immigrate. In 1833 the Tbilisi mint was closed: roubles and kopecks superseded Persian tumans, Georgian abazas and Turkish kurush; Russian weights and measures were enforced. Sugar cane from the Caspian was refined in Tbilisi; tobacco and maize were sown. The French consul Gamba felled Imeretian forests for timber and firewood. But cloth mills failed: food was so expensive that a Georgian mill-worker needed higher pay than an English one. There were few glassblowers, so coopers were imported from Turkey to make wooden casks.

In one respect Georgia was advanced: Russian officers envied the quality of swords and daggers forged in Tbilisi. In 1832 Tsar Nicolas apprenticed two senior blacksmiths from Zlatoust to learn Qaraman Elizbarashvili's

secrets: he imported sheet steel from India, smelted it with local iron, and then folded it like filo pastry.

All seemed well until 9 December 1832: then a known troublemaker, Iese Palavandishvili, visited his brother, the respected Nikoloz, Tbilisi's civil governor, and revealed a conspiracy to overthrow Russian rule. Perhaps Iese was recruiting his brother; and, knowing that Rozen's officers had intercepted correspondence with Crown Prince Aleksandre in Persia, he hoped to absolve himself. Nikoloz threatened suicide unless Iese confessed to Major-General Volkhovsky, Caucasian chief of staff. Arrest warrants were issued the next day, but rounding up the suspects took three months. Tsar Nicolas, whose own accession was marred by the Decembrists (a similar conspiracy of intellectuals and revolutionaries) and who had just crushed the Polish rebellion, ordered investigation and courts martial.

Investigation established that the conspirators were disorganized fantasists and, as Rozen reported the following autumn, 'no danger to the state'. The Bagrations were blamed as instigators, although they had no inkling of a *coup d'état*. In St Petersburg Prince Dimitri, youngest son of Crown Prince Iulon, was a suspect freethinker with a grudge because he had no high-ranking post. In Moscow Prince Okropir, Giorgi XII's scholarly son, was already under surveillance because of his interest in Jean-Jacques Rousseau; moreover, he had covertly visited Georgia in 1830. Aleksandre, the truly dangerous crown prince, however, played no part in the conspiracy: at 64, he declared himself too old and told the conspirators 'to do what they liked'. The seminal conspirator, a peasant turned teacher, journalist and littérateur Solomon Dodashvili, having witnessed the Decembrist insurrection of 1825, believed that the Decembrists should have seized the arsenal, not Senate Square; a Decembrist, Vasili Sukhorukov, had served in Tbilisi as Paskevich's official historian. Other conspirators served in the Russian army under Paskevich against the Poles, and had learnt from the Poles' mistakes. (Some 4,000 Poles were exiled to Transcaucasia after the uprising; as soldiers, administrators, doctors, engineers, they accelerated Georgia's development.) One conspirator, the writer Solomon Razmadze, went to Tabriz seeking help from the British and Iranians.

The Georgians formed a secret society, never talking to more than one member at a time. Until they saw the fate of the Poles, they had foreseen a bloodless coup and European sympathy. In 1832 they planned a violent uprising, each aristocrat bringing armed men onto Tbilisi's streets, disarming Russian forces. They pondered inviting all Russian officials to a ball or banquet and then arresting them. But the rebels never worked out the mechanics of the coup, or what government they would install. Their consensus was a constitutional monarch, King Aleksandre, sitting in one chamber with six ministers, and an elected lower chamber.

On 10 February 1834, after 70 suspects had languished for a year in Tbilisi citadel, a court martial passed ten death sentences.[21] But Baron Rozen and Tsar Nicolas wanted to placate Georgia, needing its support against the jihad in the north Caucasus highlands; Russia's reputation was blackened by the mass hangings that ended the Polish rebellion in 1830–31: Georgian death sentences were commuted to exile. Just one man, Mullah Zaman, Prince Aleksandre's courier, suffered hard labour in Siberia. Princes Dimitri and Okropir were exiled to provincial cities, as was King Erekle's daughter Fekla.[22] (As a precaution, Prince Aleksandre's young wife and infant, who were stranded in Erevan when Paskevich took the city, were prevented from joining the prince in Persia and, after a year of threats and persuasion, went to live in St Petersburg.) Solomon Dodashvili was sent to Vyatka in the Urals, where he died of tuberculosis. Minor plotters were demoted, or put under surveillance. Some, like the secretary of the French consulate in Tbilisi, Victor Letellier, who became suspect by learning Georgian, were acquitted. Most conspirators were pardoned and given government posts in Tbilisi.

The lesson Rozen drew from the 1832 conspiracy was to involve, not exclude the Georgian aristocracy in government: it took seven years to plan reforms, and another four to implement them. The conspiracy was the last attempt to restore Georgia's monarchy; henceforth Georgian radicals put social justice before independence. First principles, not ancient traditions, motivated Georgia's politicians.

Order restored, Baron Rozen focused on western Georgia, where a provisional government punished violence and anarchy, without tackling the causes. All criminal cases in Imeretia were dealt with by courts martial. In Mingrelia the Dadianis began murdering each other; when Nikoloz Dadiani died in 1834, Baron Rozen had to force the metropolitan bishop, his blood-feud enemy, to bury him, on pain of dismissal. The new Dadiani, Levan V, anticipating riches by selling timber to the Egyptians, dreamed of turning Zugdidi into a city called Grigoriopolis. Guria was in chaos: the regent Sopio had died in Turkey; her children, except the heir Davit, were sent to St Petersburg. Khasan-Bey, prince of Abkhazia, after a spell in Siberia, had been allowed back and even restored his sword. Rozen struggled for two years to prevent the legitimate Abkhaz prince, Mikhail Shervashidze, contracting an incestuous and bigamous marriage with his niece: eventually Shervashidze was removed to Russia. Rozen's last task was to persuade the two Dadeshkeliani families who controlled Svanetia to accept Russian suzerainty and baptism, together with 2,000 of their subjects. (The Dadeshkeliani princes were promised the tsar and tsaritsa as godparents.) Svan savagery and clan systems prevented alien political or religious forces getting a foothold, but this symbolic accession seemed to complete the conquest of Transcaucasia.

Rozen's career, however, folded in autumn 1837. Tsar Nicolas arrived to tour Transcaucasia, travelling from Poti to Kutaisi and then to Erevan. On 7 October the tsar's carriage overturned as it entered Tbilisi (an iron cross, 'The All-Seeing Eye', was erected to celebrate his survival). Worse, Baron Rozen contracted an alliance typical of Georgia's former overlords, marrying his nineteen-year-old daughter Lidia to a Colonel Aleksandre Dadiani. A fellow officer denounced Dadiani to the tsar for abusing his regiment: Dadiani's soldiers had no boots, their wives cut hay for Dadiani or were flogged, and Dadiani made a fortune. In front of Tbilisi's public and the weeping Baron Rozen (who had covered up his son-in-law's crimes), Nicolas I ripped off Dadiani's epaulettes and sent him under police escort to Russia. Rozen was transferred to a lowly post in Moscow's Senate; in 1839 he suffered a severe stroke and died two years later.[23]

18
Vice-regency

✠

Baron Rozen's personal approach to the Caucasus had upset Tsar Nicolas and his bureaucrats. They wanted the region treated like other Russian provinces. For some years, St Petersburg's ministers of war, finance, the interior and justice had sat on a 'Caucasian Committee', pursuing centralization. In 1837 the tsar commissioned a report from Senator Pavel Hahn who recommended dividing the Caucasus region, from the left bank of the Don to the borders of Iran, into three provinces, and shackling the region's ruler to St Petersburg's ministries.

In November 1837 a compliant bureaucrat with experience in crushing Poles, General Evgeni Golovin, was appointed commander of the Caucasian Army Corps and chief civil commander of the Caucasus. His remit was to discipline and Russify the Georgians, Armenians and Azeris. General Alexander Chernyshev, minister of war, insisted that Golovin's priority was destroying Shamil, whose Dagestani and Chechen Islamic emirate was winning a bloody jihad against Russia. (General Ermolov predicted that Golovin would not last, and that his successor, General Neidgardt, who leased a house in Moscow before departing for Tbilisi, would return even sooner. Ermolov believed only a viceroy could rule the Caucasus.[1])

Georgia had improved little since annexation: increased population was due to expanded territory and immigrants (Greek miners, Armenian traders, German colonists and Russian sectarians), not to fecundity or decreased mortality from disease, famine or banditry. Golovin gave Tbilisi a girls' boarding school, army barracks and stables, and activated the printing press; Akhaltsikhe came to life; German colonists dug irrigation canals. Golovin declared all Vakhtang VI's legal code invalid, except for articles regulating irrigation. (The Russian translation of Vakhtang's code was preposterously unusable: where the original specifies that a thief should return property and pay a fine equal to twice its value, the Russian version states that he 'should hand over two of his accomplices'.[2]) Infrastructure collapsed: the new port of Sukhumi was rendered useless when a wooden bridge

over the Inguri fell down and cut Abkhazia off from Mingrelia; Tbilisi's silk-spinning factory, worked by prisoners, was turned into military barracks; the Zubalishvili sugar refinery produced sugar cruder and dearer than imported sugar; Tbilisi's observatory had no instruments, no observers and no budget.[3] Kartli's two highways, to the Daryal Pass and to Imeretia, despite profligate expenditure, were often impassable to wheeled vehicles. Even in 1837, the scientist Dubois de Montpéreux, travelling from Akhaltsikhe to the Black Sea via Kutaisi and Racha, found Surami 'a miserable hamlet' and the once-famous Shorapani a deserted village.[4] Few Russians settled; those that did had unhappy liaisons with Georgian women, their children unacceptable bastards in both societies. True, maize and wine were now abundant, but only the rich drank tea. Mingrelia, under Levan v Dadiani, was a xenophobic tyranny. In 1838 plague spread from Akhaltsikhe, killing hundreds. Dagestani tribes took Tush shepherds hostage; Golovin had to ransom the Tush and forbid them any contact with their Muslim neighbours.

Golovin enforced anti-Jewish regulations, forbidding Kutaisi Jews to peddle goods on the grounds that Imeretian nobles were complaining that Jews impoverished the peasantry. In one aspect Golovin proved liberal: he rejected accusations that the Khevsurs, who slaughtered beasts at shrines to placate the gods, were pagans; baptism, he thought, was sufficient to classify them as Orthodox. On 10 April 1840 Senator Hahn's reforms were implemented. Imeretia, Kartli and Kakhetia and Armenia became one single province, governed by the commander-in-chief of Transcaucasia, whose deputy was military governor of Tbilisi, their powers limited by a chief commander's council appointed by the tsar.[5] Under this council came a microcosm of central government. Secondly, Tbilisi was given a mayor, with six councillors elected by the city's artisans, merchants and landowners. A committee was formed to set a budget and collect taxes. A horde of idle, corrupt bureaucrats stifled initiative and frustrated the population.[6]

Golovin's undoing was the 1841 Gurian rebellion. On 22 May villagers of Lanchkhuti chased off tax collectors; two days later, armed bands demanded the abolition of monetary taxes. Russian soldiers patrolled the villages, but by August all Guria, including its nobility, was trying to expel the Russian military. In a four-hour battle they forced Colonel Brusilov back into Ozurgeti citadel. The Ottoman bey of Ajaria, an ethnic Georgian, supplied the Gurians with munitions; the British consul in Trabzon gave moral support. At one point the Gurians nearly cut off Kutaisi from the sea. Not until September did a joint Russian-Georgian force enter Ozurgeti and crush the rebellion: 60 peasants were killed, 50 rebels were imprisoned (but amnestied the following year); one leader, Amboko Shalikashvili, was sent to Siberia. Guria was then declared a 'military district': Gurians, like Cossacks, would serve as border guards.

In October 1842 Golovin, pleading illness, was replaced by the bland, but luckier general Aleksandr Neidgardt. The 1842–3 census showed that, at last, Georgia was benefiting from peace: births outnumbered deaths two to one, although more had emigrated than immigrated. Progress was minor: Neidgardt sent five students annually to study oriental languages at St Petersburg to provide better civil servants. Otherwise, Neidgardt's rule was stagnant. Acquiring Akhaltsikhe had barely boosted the economy: cut off from the Turkey, it was no longer a trade centre. Nor did the colonists prosper: extreme sectarians, the *skoptsy* (who castrated themselves) were expelled – the sane to Siberia, the insane to an asylum in Voronezh. In 1843 many German colonists were obsessed by the Second Coming: their elder, Barbara Spon, proposed to lead them on foot to Jerusalem. Neidgardt's Cossacks blocked their departure, arrested the ringleaders, and let the colonists send just three delegates to Jerusalem.[7] (A year later the delegates returned crestfallen, and most dissident Germans rejoined the Lutheran Church.)

Neidgardt raised tax revenues, but the only industries that flourished in Tbilisi were saddlery and brick-making. Borders were now demarcated and land professionally surveyed, but there were no funds or skills for road-building. Little trade came through Sukhumi: although declared a free port, it remained closed to foreign shipping.

Dismayed by his failure to defeat Shamil's jihad, the tsar relieved Neidgardt of his post in autumn 1844. Nicolas begged Mikhail Semionovich Vorontsov, the governor of 'New Russia', from Odessa to the Crimea, to take over the Caucasus. In twenty years Vorontsov had made his province a prosperous showpiece. Vorontsov's liberal agnosticism (under a veneer of conservative piety) and his initiative made him a bold choice, but Nicolas realized that Vorontsov was the only person with the military experience to overcome Shamil and the administrative skills to civilize the province. The minister of war, General Chernyshev, after inspecting the Caucasus in 1840, recommended Vorontsov as a likely bringer of victory. Ermolov thought Vorontsov, 'the best of men, a friend and dear brother', the ideal viceroy: he sent his own sons to serve under him. Bargaining took all winter of 1844–5: Vorontsov was 63, often unwell, and accepted the post only if plenipotentiary and answerable only to the tsar. Even so, he needed his longstanding friendship with General Chernyshev and Kankrin, minister of finance, to ward off ministerial intrigues.

As the first Caucasian *namestnik* (viceroy), Vorontsov was greeted in Tbilisi with jubilation. He was Georgia's only foreign ruler commemorated by public subscription with a statue (destroyed in Soviet times.) He brought with him his Polish wife, Countess Katerzyna Branicka, who in Bessarabia had been pursued by Pushkin (Vorontsov sent Pushkin off to inspect a plague of locusts). The countess took great interest in the

Giorgi XII, king of Kartli and Kakhetia (1798–1801).

Caucasus, especially in girls' education; very often she signed documents in her husband's name. Vorontsov initiated a flurry of reforms: landowners were allowed to emancipate serfs; students from Georgia could study at any university in the empire. Hahn's unwieldy agglomeration was split: Tbilisi and Imeretia became separate provinces; Kutaisi now had government offices. Schools were set up even among the Khevsurs and Pshavs. Vorontsov ordered steamboats from England: navigation to both Sukhumi and Baku made travel to and from European Russia easier. Tbilisi had a public library and readable newspapers.

In 1845 Catholic missionaries were expelled, despite their appeals to the tsarina, and converting the Orthodox was forbidden: a Father Kharischirashvili left for Istanbul, where he founded a Catholic monastery at Feriköy, which became a focus for Georgian Christians abroad.[8] But Vorontsov's effort to glorify Orthodoxy ended in a sickening spectacle. He had Russian craftsmen cast a one-tonne church bell in Tbilisi for Sioni cathedral: in January 1848 soldiers dragged the bell across the frozen Kura. Vorontsov ignored the bell-founder's warning that no Jew should be allowed near the bell: a Jewish soldier was crushed to death by the bell.[9]

Ethnic integration was Vorontsov's strongest card. Vorontsov was often accused of preferring 'natives, even Tatars' to Russians. He spoke French to his family and subordinates, and English to himself (the son of

an ambassador to Britain, he was educated in London).[10] Georgians of royal blood were rehabilitated: Ivan Malkhazovich Andronikov, King Solomon II's nephew, was Tbilisi's military governor; Giorgi Eristavi, an Aragvi duke, was Kutaisi's governor-general; Grigol II Dadiani, Grigol Mukhranbatoni and Iason Chavchavadze were generals fighting Shamil. In 1850, despite her murdering General Lazarev, Vorontsov had Queen Mariam interred in Mtskheta with cannon salvoes.[11] Caucasian languages were given their due: Russian schoolboys in Transcaucasia had to study one local language. Vorontsov was very well informed: in 1846–7 he commissioned the young scholar Félicité-Marie Brosset to publish old manuscripts, translate Georgia's chronicles and to travel the whole country, minuting the country's ancient monuments and their historical and ethnological importance (Brosset's *Voyages* remain indispensable, for many monuments he describes have since crumbled into ruins). Vorontsov thought Georgia 'not yet ready for a university', but he fostered education. Shiite and Sunni Muslims had schools by 1850, and in 1852 trainee priests were taught less Greek and more medicine and agriculture.

Vorontsov's economic ventures were idiosyncratic. Tbilisi acquired a successful match factory. Hundredweights of leeches, the mainstay of army medicine, were bought from James Marr, a Scots adventurer in Guria, for export. Tobacco and cottonseed came from the USA and tea seed from China. Maltese donkeys were imported to breed tougher mules. Citrus trees were brought from the Crimea (where Vorontsov had introduced them). Beekeepers came from Russia, merino sheep from Spain, vines from Vorontsov's Crimean estates. The tea seed withered; the donkey stallions died of heat stroke; the vines infected Kakhetia with phylloxera. But German colonists near Gori grew good tobacco. In 1847 Vorontsov had tea planted in Guria, and 30 years later Georgian tea won a gold medal in Paris and became a major cash crop. The export of valuable oak and walnut was forbidden: Guria's forests were spared James Marr's axe. Vorontsov forbade Russian soldiers to be used as cheap craftsmen, and so the artisans of Tbilisi's guilds flourished. Tbilisi had an artillery foundry and German-managed steelworks by 1850. Farmers' markets came to Gori and an annual fair to Sighnaghi. Tbilisi staged an agricultural exhibition in 1850. Vorontsov used his English connections (ironically, his nephew was the Rt. Hon. Sidney Herbert, secretary of war during the Crimean War), and Georgian produce won medals at the Great Exhibition in London.

Like every conqueror of Georgia since Pompey, Vorontsov saw communications and transport as Transcaucasia's worst lack. Bridges were washed away every spring. The Scotsman Keill built a stone bridge at Gori: it lasted one year. But the Mikhailovsky Bridge (named after Mikhail Vorontsov) by the architect Scudieri linking east and west Tbilisi still

stands. Reconstructing the Georgian Military Highway defeated local engineers: it was said in Tbilisi that the road might as well have been paved with the millions of roubles spent on it. Shallow-draft steamboats, however, could ascend the Kura from the Caspian and the Rioni from the Black Sea, if only the summer sandbanks and spring driftwood were dredged. Vorontsov expanded coal mining in Racha to fuel these future boats, and imported consultants to start water transport from Imeretia across the Black Sea, up the Danube to Central Europe.

Thanks to Vorontsov, income from customs duties doubled, as steamships began unloading at Poti and Sukhumi. Resorts such as Borjomi spa were opened to all citizens except Jews. The drawback to this embryonic prosperity was a new crime: coaches carrying government cash became irresistible to bandits (and, later, Bolsheviks). Corruption, especially in the army, where soldiers were caught selling munitions to highland guerrillas, was fought with courts martial.

In crushing rebellious Gurians, Mingrelians, Abkhaz and Svans, Vorontsov surpassed his predecessors or successors. In 1847 he ended the quarrel between Abkhazia and Mingrelia over their borderland territory (Samurzaqano), putting it under Kutaisi's military governor and paying the Dadiani off with 25,000 roubles. When Levan Dadiani died in 1846 and his successor Davit in 1853, Vorontsov effectively ended Mingrelia's autonomy by appointing as regent to the infant Nikoloz his grandmother, Ekaterina Chavchavadze, Griboedov's sister-in-law, a St Petersburg *grande dame* rather than a Dadiani: by the 1850s the Dadianis lived in European splendour, with Swiss chefs at a Russian-speaking court in Zugdidi palace. Some 12,000 gentry and nobility lived off Mingrelia's 100,000 peasants.[12] Guria, too, was subordinated to Imeretia, Vorontsov considering the Gurians unfit to be border guards. Abkhazia was provisionally left autonomous: Vorontsov turned a blind eye to Shervashidze's machinations with slavery and the Ottomans. Vorontsov also left Svanetia outside the law: in 1843 Nikoloz Dadeshkeliani attacked the rival branch of Konstantine Dadeshkeliani, killing seventeen servants, burning Konstantine's grandmother alive, and taking his sister prisoner.

Vorontsov's success reconciled the tsar to his liberalism and even defiance. When Tsarevich Alexander toured the Caucasus in 1850, his reaction was the opposite of his father's in 1837. Vorontsov's court was a miniature St Petersburg, with banquets, balls and salons. Vorontsov cultivated the nobility: he drew up a definitive list of noblemen, after rejecting over 1,300 claims. No serf was now emancipated without documentation. Vorontsov won popularity by establishing Tbilisi's theatre: a Russian Count Sollogub and an impresario, Barbieri, imported Italian opera singers and ballet dancers to create an oasis of European culture. (This, it was said, diverted Georgians from anti-Russian conspiracies.) Vorontsov enlisted

Russia's greatest actor, Mikhail Shchepkin, to start repertory theatre. Moreover, he encouraged Georgian drama (the censor passed 20 plays, largely farces), and himself praised Giorgi Eristavi as a Georgian Molière who, despite being an 1832 conspirator, was a leading civil servant, journalist, theatre director, playwright and actor. (After 1832, Eristavi served in Poland and became a romantic nationalist in the Polish spirit.) Eristavi founded *Tsiskari* (Dawn), at first the sole outlet for Georgian novels. Eristavi's plays *The Lawsuit*, *The Madwoman* and *The Family Settlement* remain entertaining to this day. Eristavi fostered younger playwrights, Antonovi and Kereselidze. Mikhail Vorontsov invested his own and the state's money in the theatre and backed *Tsikari*: he was the midwife of modern Georgian literature, even if Tbilisi's theatre tried mainly to turn Georgians and Armenians into Russian-speaking Europeans.

Georgians liked Vorontsov's flamboyance. He was a reckless warrior, pursuing Shamil over Dagestan's passes, his tent shredded by bullets, in 1845 barely surviving entrapment at Dargo, Shamil's base, after losing 3,000 men, and then declaring, as had Ermolov, that Dagestan was not worth a drop of blood, and that the enemy should be pacified by negotiation. He was a bon viveur, too. His notorious 'passion' (possibly unconsummated) was the married princess Elene Orbeliani. In the hot summers, while the princess recuperated in the Crimea, Vorontsov visited a mistress, Irma Csészényi, who diverted the town with her escort and Amazonian dress, and young officers with her favours. (Vorontsov dealt coolly with his mistress's lovers: surprising her *in flagrante* he dispatched the officer to the front line, rang for the maid and ordered a change of sheets and a bath for Irma.)[13] Universally respected, even by Shamil, Vorontsov got on with figures as unlikely as the 90-year-old Armenian patriarch Nerses V. The normally cantankerous radical Akaki Tsereteli testified:

> In those days Georgians had so much affection for Prince Vorontsov, the former viceroy, and so many good memories of him, that no Georgian could imagine staying in, or travelling to, Russia without visiting Vorontsov's widow . . . when I gave her a jet crucifix, she expressed great pleasure: 'The Georg - ians remember me and I can see that it will be a long time before they forget my husband.'
>
> 'As long as the memory of Georgia is not destroyed, the name of Vorontsov will not be forgotten,' I said in a squeaky voice: these words were something I had often heard my elders say, and they had settled deep in my heart.
>
> The princess turned to one of the lady visitors and asked her: 'Wouldn't you think you were in Italy? Don't forget that

> simple craftsmen in jet make this sort of thing in Imeretia. They are peasants and haven't seen anything except the icons and the descents from the Cross in their churches: Georgia's nature is their only art gallery and school, but that nature is fabulous, inspirational and exciting. Doesn't this simple art prove that, if circumstances let them, they will have their own Raphaels and Michelangelos? The late prince was deeply fond of the Georgians, he had great respect for their past and great hopes for their future. He used to say, "This little Georgia is the most beautiful colour in the embroidery of Russia and will be the strongest gold thread in its weave. Only we must let them have their way, lead them onwards and give them a helping hand."'[14]

Vorontsov wanted the world to see him as an enlightened European. His reputation was threatened by Georgia's first case of 'blood libel'. In 1850, when a dead boy was found in a forest near Surami, Jews were accused of killing him in order to make Passover bread with Christian blood. Jewish houses were stormed, and the local lord, Dimitri Abashidze, concocted evidence (a child eyewitness, a blood-soaked rag). A deputation of four Jews travelled to Tbilisi to appeal to Vorontsov. Eight Jews were tried, and acquitted. Sir Moses Montefiore was informed by Constantinople's Jews and received Vorontsov's suave assurances that cases, let alone convictions, of 'blood libel' were impossible under his administration. What Vorontsov concealed from Montefiore was the prosecution's appeal, after which in 1853 the St Petersburg senate decided that seven Jews remained 'under suspicion' and sentenced them to exile under police surveillance, while prominent friends continued to persuade Vorontsov that Jews in Borjomi were murdering Christian children.[15]

Only once did the tsar interfere with Vorontsov's administration. In 1851, at the Armenian market in Tbilisi, a mass brawl broke out: booths were smashed, and an Azeri Jew was killed by a flying brick.[16] The tsar heard that five had been killed. Vorontsov, when reproached, explained that mass brawls were a traditional sport among Georgia's townsmen and had been encouraged by previous rulers. The tsar ordered the brawls to take place outside town, under police supervision, with hand fighting only.

At the end of 1853 Vorontsov sickened; he was depressed by the Russo–Turkish, soon the Crimean, War, which threatened Russia's achievements in the Caucasus, as well as the Balkans. He resigned and, after a grant of sick leave, was in spring 1854 replaced by a nonentity, General Read. Read followed instructions left by Vorontsov, but was too ignorant and hesitant to develop the viceroy's projects. The Russo–Turkish war not only monopolized the Russian command's attention, but, by blocking the

Black Sea ports, also paralysed the country. Salt ran out; a new road over the Surami Pass, vital for Russian troops defending Imeretia and Mingrelia, was abandoned and the old road, with its boulders and quagmires, patched up. British and French entrepreneurs still carried on business, albeit under surveillance. Equally suspect were the highlanders, whom Read stopped from buying grain, lest they supply Shamil's Dagestanis, now allies of the Turks, British and French. In October 1854 villagers at Shorapani, starved of grain and salt, their cattle dying, with no seed corn, and no income from renting horses and wagons to travellers, ran away: they were treated as rebels. All Mingrelia and Guria complained, too: Read saw Imeretia's Catholic clergy (especially the Jesuit Don Antonio) as French agents; he suspected Polish exiles, and even an American businessman of sedition. The invasion of Crimea by British and French forces in spring 1854 made Poti and Sukhumi expect similar landings: the prospect lifted Mingrelian, Gurian and Abkhaz spirits as much as it depressed the Russians.

Read's reputation was ruined in July 1854 by a Dagestani invasion of Kakhetia: Lezgi killed over 100, seizing nearly 700, including two princesses, Chavchavadze and Orbeliani, with their small children and a French governess.[17] The hostages were given to Shamil. To ransom the prisoners, the tsar had to release Shamil's son Jamal ad-Din. Generous compensation was paid to the Chavchavadzes and Orbelianis.

Before leaving, in September 1854, General Read organized the funeral of Solomon II's sister, Maia: her son General Andronikov was lent 4,000 roubles for the rites, and her granddaughter was made lady-in-waiting to the tsar. Then Read was replaced by the fearful General Nikolai Muraviov, one of the butchers of Hungary in 1849. Muraviov arrived as viceroy in Tbilisi on 1 March 1855, the day that Tsar Nicolas's death was announced – an event which Giorgi Eristavi was the only poet of the Russian empire to mourn in verse. Muraviov immediately reversed whatever initiative of Vorontsov he could: the tsar's death was a pretext to close the theatre. (Georgian-language theatre would not revive for 30 years.) Muraviov proposed dismissing Italian singers and dancers, and replacing the orchestra with a regimental band. His assistant, Count Sollogub, declared the Georgian repertoire 'depraved'. (Vorontsov wrote from his sick bed to protest that 'the collapse of the theatre would have the gravest consequences'.) Muraviov, new to the Caucasus and a lover of parades and inspections, was disliked: he closed Tbilisi's wool factory, the experimental farm and complained that the Botanical Gardens were unprofitable. Muraviov shunned the Armenian patriarch Nerses V as an enemy agent for receiving letters from Armenians in British-owned India. He refused to employ Georgians in the administration. He denounced sectarian dissenters for their long hair, vegetarianism and marital celibacy. He hated petitioners, refusing petitions from women, unless widowed.

Muraviov's indifference, and the stringencies of war, wrecked the educational system: of 1,323 school-leavers, only 368 graduated; schools in Akhaltsikhe and Redut-Kale were converted to military hospitals or burned down. Muraviov merely insisted that pupils learned all Russian Orthodox prayers by heart and wore uniform. The general showed his contempt for his subjects by walking naked to and from his residence to the bathhouse across the street.[18] The only Georgian whom Muraviov cultivated was the Russian *grande dame* Ekaterine Dadiani, regent of Mingrelia: he overlooked her appalling cruelty, which drove Mingrelia's peasants to asylum in Turkey, and her feuds with her brothers-in-law, which destabilized the principality.

Fortunately for Georgia, Muraviov soon left civil government to Prince Bebutov, a descendant of the Armenian mayors of Tbilisi. Muraviov's main task was fighting Turks, who were attacking on three fronts: from the south an army tried to capture Akhaltsikhe, and thus the valley route to Tbilisi; from the southwest by sea and land Turkish forces seized ports they once held and gained footholds in Abkhazia, Mingrelia and Guria, enabling them to travel up the Rioni towards Kutaisi; from the northeast, Shamil's Dagestanis repeatedly attacked Kakhetia. Akhaltsikhe was successfully defended by the Imeretian militia that Muraviov conscripted, but Russian-Georgian forces were pushed back from the river Inguri: in autumn 1854 Mingrelia and Abkhazia were vulnerable. Mikhail Shervashidze of Abkhazia was rumoured to have changed his name back to Hamid-Bey and to be negotiating with the Turks for full power over the eastern Black Sea coast, remaining neutral 'until the British and French actually landed'. (Oddly enough, Muraviov ignored Shervashidze's double-dealing and accepted his explanation, when the Turks were repulsed, that he had acted only to limit the Turks' pillaging.) Ekaterine Dadiani, however, rejected Turkish offers, and Mingrelia was laid to waste by Ottoman forces, Zugdidi's palace, churches and houses burnt to the ground. Guria was saved by Gurians under Solomon II's nephew, General Andronikov. Muraviov spent most time on besieging the citadel of Kars: eventually, with enormous losses, Kars was taken. In the Treaty of Paris of spring 1856, Kars was of inestimable value: when Russia returned Kars, Turkey let Russia keep the Black Sea ports from Poti to Sukhumi and abandoned all claims to Guria, Mingrelia and Abkhazia.

Tsar Alexander II, acceding in 1855, was affected as much by Russia's defeat in the Crimea as by his liberal upbringing. Hopes rose in Tbilisi when General Muraviov was recalled on 22 July 1856 and Prince Bariatinsky, once an adjutant and always a follower of Vorontsov, was appointed viceroy. Like Vorontsov, Bariatinsky had full powers and reported only to the tsar (childhood friends, they maintained an affectionate relationship).[19]

The tsar was obsessed with defeating Shamil's Dagestanis and Chechens. Bariatinsky, like Vorontsov, believed in subtler means: deforestation to deprive guerrillas of cover; bribery to suborn Shamil's allies; solemn promises to respect Islam and customary law, and to limit colonization to the plains. Bariatinsky fielded 300,000 Russian troops, now equipped with rifles as modern as the Chechens'; Shamil, after a beloved son's death, was introspective and isolated. Bariatinsky now achieved the impossible: first trapping Shamil in his mountain eyrie, and then, in August 1859, taking him alive.

Bariatinsky, free to concentrate on civic matters, took lessons in Georgian from the antiquarian and scholar Platon Ioseliani.[20] Now a field marshal, Bariatinsky had even more autonomy than Vorontsov: he wrenched his budget, except for customs duties, out of the hands of the ministry of finance and spent freely. He made his council merely consultative, and worked with four trusted officials, known in Tbilisi as 'the Ministry of Progress'. Armenia and Azerbaijan became separate provinces, while Imeretia (with Mingrelia, Abkhazia and Guria) became a province, and Kartli-Kakhetia became the governor-generalship of Tbilisi. The first signs of the Bariatinskys spring were payments to Guria to restore burnt villages, and free grain to the poor of Tbilisi. Trade with Iran and with Turkestan, as well as the resumption of Black Sea shipping, promised prosperity. British ships were suspected of smuggling arms and warriors to Shamil, but they and other foreign vessels traded freely at Sukhumi and Redut-Kale. More citizens had more rights to move freely. Merchants, first of Tbilisi, and then of Kutaisi, were recognized not only as traditional Georgian *mokalake* (burghers), but given the rights of Russian *meshchane* (townsmen), typically, exemption from corporal punishment. Traditional *amkari* (guilds) were allowed to coexist with the Russian system of merchants. The *aznauri* (lower gentry) of Imeretia and Guria were given parity with the *tavadi* (higher gentry). Although the emancipation of Georgian serfs was still only on the horizon, Bariatinsky organized the preliminary land surveys and census needed to free the peasantry from the nobility.

Muraviov's retrograde measures were repealed: horticultural colleges were set up in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, followed by a viticultural school in Kakhetia. A Dutchman's silk mill was subsidized in Kutaisi, while Zugdidi had silk factories run by Davit Dadiani and a French Count Rosemorduc. A state stud was established to improve the quality of Georgia's horses. Herculean efforts were made to construct durable roads over the Daryal and Surami passes and to build a second route over the Caucasus to link Kutaisi and northern Ossetia. Postal stations were nationalized, in the hope of enabling travellers to change horses without delays, bribes or resorting to violence. The tsar sent five geologists to search for valuable nonferrous ores, coal and slate.

George Dawe, *Field-Marshal Count Mikhail Vorontsov*. Vorontsov was viceroy of the Caucasus from 1844 to 1854.

Auguste Marc (1818–1886), *Prince Aleksandr Bariatinsky*. Bariatinsky was viceroy of the Caucasus from 1856 to 1862.

The drawback to this flurry of expensive projects was widespread ineradicable theft of state funds by officials, lowly clerks or army generals. Bariatinsky's plans to expand education and to produce a new generation of honest indigenous civil servants foundered, but Vorontsov's widow sent enormous sums of her own money for Georgian education, including 80,000 roubles for girls' schools. The number of educated Georgians was now significant. Not only dedicated public servants, but also men of letters appeared: critical and historical studies were published by Church-educated scholars like Platon Ioseliani or the university teacher Davit Chubinashvili. There were enough readers to fund publications. In 1856 private schools opened: a priest in Sviri village set a pattern. The number of private letters posted in 1856 – nearly 600,000 – testifies to a literate civil society.

When Bariatinsky arrived in August 1856, river navigation under steam had begun. Bariatinsky lobbied for a railway to join Tbilisi to the Black and Caspian seas. Tsar Alexander thought the idea excellent, even more so in 1861 when he crossed Georgia by boat and road from Poti.[21] But St Petersburg's minister of finance told Bariatinsky that Barings Bank of London would not invest in their recent enemy: perhaps Georgia could afford a horse-drawn railway. Western Georgia, devastated by war, presented other pressing problems. Gurians trading with their Muslim compatriots across the border were threatened with deportation to Russia. In Imeretia, smuggling and robbery went unpunished: even Gelati monastery was looted. A cholera epidemic spread as far as Kakhetia.

Meanwhile, news of the emancipation of serfs in Russia alarmed the nobility and emboldened the peasantry: Georgia would lag seven years behind Russia in enacting the reforms that, in theory, made every Russian equal before the law; the delay led to universal unrest. Georgian nobles insisted that tradition exempted them from emancipating serfs; Bariatinsky's administration saw that Russian solutions were inapplicable, for many nobles owned no land and lived purely on their serfs' tithes and labour – the poorer nobility would need compensation for lost income. Georgian serfdom, where nobles and priests could either be, or own, serfs, was labyrinthine: it had to be understood before it could be abolished. As in Russia, committees of nobles in each district were invited to produce proposals; unlike Russian nobles, Georgians were generally obstructive.

Bariatinsky first tackled the semi-autonomous principalities of Mingrelia, Svanetia and Abkhazia. Alexander II, the 'liberator', would not, unlike his father, tolerate self-rule by non-Russians. Ekaterine Dadiani provided pretexts for her own dethronement. She asked Colonel Mikhail Koliubakin, Imeretia's military governor, for Cossacks to quell her peasants, complaining of radical Mingrelians muttering that 'no gentry should exist', that 'luxury is a sin'. In May 1857 there was gunfire in Zugdidi;

4,000 peasants armed with cudgels and billhooks roused a whole district, attacking priests, removing icons, depriving nobles of their servants. By late May a blacksmith, Utu Mikadze 'the Danton of the Mingrelian revolution', as Ekaterine Dadiani alleged,[22] was leading a peasant army, some armed with rifles, marching on Kutaisi. Koliubakin and the governor-general, Prince Gagarin, talked to Mikadze, agreed that Ekaterine Dadiani's extortion was to blame, but still arrested the ringleaders.

Ekaterine Dadiani, despite showering Bariatinsky with almost daily letters, had to surrender day-to-day running of Mingrelia to Koliubakin's Cossacks; her quarrelling brothers-in-law were deported to Tbilisi until a 'committee of inquiry' under Bariatinsky's counsellor Hippolyte Ducroisy could report. Ducroisy privately complained that Ekaterine's 'obstinacy passed all limits' and recommended her 'abdication' with compensation. Ekaterine was so tempestuous that she was gingerly approached through her brother, an aide-de-camp to the tsar, and her sister, Nino Griboedova-Chavchavadze (who died during the negotiations). Prince Gagarin took a liking to the rebel blacksmith Mikadze, released him, and appointed him his aide. Mingrelian nobles signed petitions both for and against Ekaterine, making accusations against the ruling family which, if only one tenth true, should have led to the Dadianis' incarceration. By August 1857 Mingrelia was governed by a provisional council, which effectively abolished serfdom, the peasants paying only land rent, and choosing their own elders, tax collectors and magistrates: Imeretians then demanded similar privileges. Ekaterine Dadiani was finally moved to St Petersburg. (When her son Nikoloz came of age ten years later, he was paid a million roubles to renounce all claims to Mingrelia.)

Ever since the bloody quarrel of 1843 between the two Dadeshkeliani clans, Svanetia had simmered. Eastern or 'free' Svanetia, nominally under Russian rule, was supervised by Prince Mikeladze; the west was divided between the two Dadeshkeliani clans. In 1855 blood feud resulted in Konstantine Dadeshkeliani's brothers murdering Jansugh, son of Nikoloz Dadeshkeliani, as he went to join the army in Guria; furthermore, Konstantine was urging 'free' Svans to swear oaths against Russia. When the snows melted in 1856, a Russian force under the scholar-soldier Baron Uslar entered Svanetia from the north, ostensibly to survey. Unexpectedly, they were welcomed, and allowed to send the murder suspects, the brothers Tengiz and Islam, first to Tbilisi for interrogation and then into exile at Vyatka; another brother, Aleksandre, joined a regiment in Russia. In 1857 Konstantine was persuaded that appealing to Napoleon III might save Svanetian autonomy. Bariatinsky found Konstantine's letter to be treasonable, and the Svan prince was summoned to Prince Gagarin, military governor of Kutaisi, and told he was being exiled to Armenia that day.[23] Konstantine, despite his fondness for the governor, fatally stabbed Gagarin,

and killed outright a civil servant and a translator, before barricading himself in a house opposite. Wounded in the arm, he was seized, court-martialled and, despite fears of blood feud engulfing Russians as well as Svans, executed by firing squad.[24]

Three years later, Koliubakin, now a major-general governing Imeretia, let Dadeshkeliani's widow take her husband's body and rebury it discreetly in consecrated ground.[25] (When the chief of the gendarmerie informed the tsar, Koliubakin had to resign.) The Dadeshkeliani children were educated in St Petersburg and Moscow at government expense, and Svanetia was ruled by a Georgian prefect. At modest cost (one prefect, one translator, a capital sum of 150,000 roubles to compensate the survivors for loss of land), Svanetia's autonomy was ended.

The tsar and Bariatinsky had radical plans for Abkhazia, while the highlanders of Chechnya and Dagestan, their leader defeated, were left in peace. The Abkhaz and other indigenous peoples of the north-west Caucasus occupied a strategic maritime zone and well-watered, forested, fertile hill country. Mikheil Shervashidze-Chachba's contacts with British ships, Polish exiles and other enemies were ignored only because Russia's army was not yet ready to annexe the eastern Black Sea coast and mountains.

By 1860 Bariatinsky had transformed Georgia. In Tbilisi the Italian theatre was resurrected; 200 of the latest 'photonaphthil' street lamps burned kerosene from Baku; 150 French citizens, all of whom Bariatinsky knew by name, provided the city with the latest French corsets, books, cuisine, manners and opinions; a central Alexander park was laid out. The refurbishment of the city faltered only when the architect Scudieri was killed falling off the scaffolding of a new cathedral. In Kutaisi and Tbilisi provinces there were now nearly 3,000 secondary school pupils; the two cities were linked by express mail coach. Bariatinsky swept beggars off the streets into almshouses and prisons. But Asiatic aspects still dominated: approaching Tbilisi from the east, the traveller was struck by a gallows from which swung the corpses of two murderers; from November to March the main avenue, Golovin Prospekt, was ankle-, even axle-deep in mud; other streets were surfaced only with river gravel (cobbles were expensive; street paving was charged to the residents); Tbilisi had 69 murders a year, and many robberies. European civilization came at a cost: Alexandre Dumas records that a meal in a restaurant, a new hat, the hire of a horse or a valet cost five times more than in France.[26] Importation was expensive; so was administration, when civil servants had to be lured by 100 per cent pensions and impunity for fraud.

Armenians benefited most from Bariatinsky's liberalism: they controlled Tbilisi's industries and trade. When Patriarch Nerses V died in 1857, they chose their new patriarch, Mateos, whom Bariatinsky fetched from Constantinople and ceremoniously received in Tbilisi, before he settled in

the Armenian ecclesiastic capital, Echmiadzin. Bariatinsky's Armenophilia upset the Orthodox, as did his encouragement of sectarians, notably Old Believers. The Orthodox, however, were given a Society of St Nino, which aimed to reconvert Muslim Ossetians to Christianity. This activity had the beneficial effect of establishing literacy in Ossetian and, to a lesser degree, in other highland languages. Bariatinsky was helped by linguists like Baron Uslar who devised alphabets and elementary school materials for Ossetians and Chechens, but the implementation was crude – Cossacks would forcibly baptize villagers in muddy ponds, which led to virulent resistance from Muslim Imams.

Like Vorontsov, Bariatinsky suffered ill health, and was so amorous that he was considered more dangerous to a married officer than to a Dagestani rebel. (Armenians complained that they were never promoted in the Russian civil service because their wives rejected Bariatinsky's advances; they muttered that 'Georgian women love being under a viceroy'.) Like many bibulous Georgian rulers, Bariatinsky was tormented by gout; he was by 1861 bedridden and had to sail from Poti to Trieste, where he went by train to Dresden to consult Dr Walter, a renowned specialist. Bariatinsky then disappeared, incognito, to recuperate in Tenerife and Malaga, and announced that he needed more treatment in Dresden. In fact, he was enjoying a honeymoon with his 27-year-old mistress, Elisabed Orbeliani, 'a sort of cat', one observer commented. Elisabed's husband, Vladimir Davydov, turned a blind eye as long as he was promoted for his complacency. Davydov, however, proved unpromotable: in Europe he challenged Bariatinsky to a duel, and was then induced to divorce Elisabed, whose parents Prince Dimitri and Princess Mariam Orbeliani (reputed to be 'the cleverest woman in Georgia')[27] travelled to St Petersburg to ensure that Bariatinsky (a bachelor) married Elisabed in 1862.[28] Tsar Alexander, not at all condemnatory '*sur l'affaire délicate*', blessed Bariatinsky's union. Gout was the only reason for Bariatinsky's resignation in 1861 (he lived sixteen years in provincial Russia with Princess Orbeliani and her adopted sister, his gout alleviated by the prayers of Shamil, who maintained a fond correspondence with his captor). In Tbilisi Prince Giorgi Orbeliani acted as viceroy.

Holed up in Wilno, Bariatinsky was visited by the tsar's youngest brother Mikhail Nikolaevich: in November 1862 the tsar and the outgoing viceroy concurred that Mikhail Nikolaevich, although only 30, was a willing and able successor. The tsar's other younger brother, Konstantin Nikolaevich, was viceroy of Poland, and while encountering entrenched resistance to his reforms, the tsar needed his kin in post. Konstantin resigned after the 1863 Polish rebellion, but Mikhail ruled successfully until 1881, when Alexander III acceded.

The grand duke lacked his brother's energy or intelligence; his knowledge of the Caucasus was gleaned from a tour decades previously. But he

happily delegated all but ceremonial duties to prominent Georgians like General Grigol Orbeliani and Dimitri Qipiani. His closeness to the tsar raised hopes that the Caucasus would prosper like Odessa and the Crimea, and that more lands lost to the Ottomans would be recovered.

The grand duke reached a festively illuminated Tbilisi via the Daryal Pass on 16 March 1863; the pregnant grand duchess (who gave birth to two more children in Tbilisi) sailed to Poti, and was met by the grand duke.[29] The viceroy's first concern, however, was to help the Tsar and the army in a ruthless ethnic cleansing of the northwest Caucasus. After Shamil's capture, the last resistance came from Circassians, Ubykh and Abaza of the mountains and the coast. By 1863 they were crushed and given ultimatums – ceding their lands to Cossack and Russian settlers, or deportation to the Ottoman empire. All the Ubykh (now extinct), and half the Circassians, Abaza and Abkhaz chose deportation: between 1864 and 1867 they were dispossessed of all but hand luggage, herded onto ships provided by Armenian contractors at 3 roubles per head: of 200,000 shipped to Anatolia, probably only half survived. Typhus, dysentery, starvation, shipwreck killed so many that 'genocide' is no exaggeration.[30]

Mikhail Shervashidze realized that staying neutral during the Russo-Turkish war had cost him Abkhazia. His pleas – that his son be appointed prince in his stead, that he be paid a million roubles to remain in Abkhazia as a private person – were rejected. In 1864 Grand Duke Mikhail declared Abkhazia a Russian 'military district'. Shervashidze asked for permission to emigrate to Jerusalem: he was refused. He asked the sultan of Turkey to send a ship: this was treason. Mikhail Shervashidze was exiled to Voronezh, where he died in 1866. Abkhazia was then renamed 'Sukhumi District' and merged with Kutaisi province: the last flame of indigenous rule in the Caucasus was extinguished. The remaining Abkhaz (38,000, as opposed to 60,000 in 1864) were a minority in their own land: Armenian, Mingrelian, Turkic, Georgian, Greek and Russian settlers and officials occupied Sukhumi and the deserted villages. In summer 1866, during ethnic cleansing at Lykhny, the heart of the Abkhaz Bzyb clans, 5,000 Abkhaz rebelled, killing a Russian colonel, a captain and all their soldiers (who were drawing up lists of peasants), and then marched on Sukhumi: they were massacred. By 1869 two-thirds of Sukhumi district's population was declared to have accepted Orthodox Christianity. Sukhumi had 1,600 inhabitants in 1864; twenty years later it had a mere 412.

Grand Duke Mikhail implemented the tsar's reforms in the Caucasus: they were delayed and watered down. Not until 1871 were the last serfs freed, and then they were 'temporarily obligated', sometimes surrendering to the nobles more of their harvest than they had as serfs. Bariatinsky's head of administration, Kruzenshtern, gave committees of district nobles six months to put plans to a 'Central Peasant Committee'. Tbilisi's nobility

was chaired by Dimitri Qipiani, despite objections by senior princes like Grigol Orbeliani (now the grand duke's chief executive). The committee demanded 100 roubles compensation per adult male serf, and a tax on farming the gentry's former land; they wanted to keep compulsory unpaid peasant labour. A total of 240 major landowners in Kartli and Kakheti were sent questionnaires; 552 attended an assembly from 27 April to 7 June 1863; the majority 'project' (excluding aristocrats like Grigol Orbeliani) agreed to 'sacrifice' their rights for 400 roubles per peasant household, but claimed that emancipated serfs could not receive land, because (a) boundaries were in dispute, (b) there was so little available that landowners would become beggars and tramps, and (c) the peasants already had the best land. (The minority 'project' refused emancipated serfs even the land they cultivated for themselves, recognizing only their ownership of buildings they had erected or vines they had planted, though some would sell land to former serfs.)

Tbilisi's chief judge, Niko Chavchavadze, insisted, however, that emancipation without land was pointless. The viceroy and the tsar modified the project. Finally, on 8 November 1864, with 101 cannon salvos, serfs in Transcaucasia were granted the 'Tsar's grace'. It took seven years for serfs to receive 5 or 10 hectares a household, but gentry owning less than 60 hectares were exempted from distribution. Serf-owners received 25 roubles for each adult male serf they lost (50 roubles if they had owned fewer than 21). Unlike Russians, Georgian peasants now owned land individually, not communally, but without local self-government. The reform was painless for the nobility: Tbilisi province's nobility kept two-thirds of the 85,000 hectares they had cultivated. In 1865 Kutaisi province followed suit, and so in 1866 did Guria and Mingrelia. In Abkhazia, where serfdom took idiosyncratic forms, and many peasants lived better than princes, the 1870 abolition imposed a redemption tax on the peasants for land they had hitherto cultivated freely: rebellion ensued.[31]

Tsar Alexander's second major reform was the codification of Russian law, civil and criminal, and equal legal rights for all: in Russia itself, the legal system became one of the most advanced in Europe – investigating magistrates prepared cases; suspects had defence lawyers and were tried by jury; judges were elected; corporal and capital punishment was restricted. In Transcaucasia, as in other outlying areas, the reforms came late (1868) and were limited to codifying Russian law, to equality before the law and defence lawyers: Georgia was judged too primitive for investigating magistrates, trial by jury, or elected judges. Worse, court procedures were held in Russian, and only Russians could be judges: a monoglot Georgian unable to pay a bilingual lawyer was helpless.

Thirdly, limited local government was introduced: peasants, if the governor approved, elected elders and judges to a village council handling

minor matters. Cities, however, won representation only after violent protest. Implementing reforms required raising taxes: the obvious sources were Tbilisi's tradesmen and merchants. On 26 June 1865 trade guild members gathered at the Armenian Khojevank cemetery and declared a strike: all shops, inns, cab ranks, carters and restaurants stopped work until the new taxes were rescinded. Tbilisi's military governor Niko Chavchavadze had troops open fire: over the next two days, a score of strikers and one tax collector were killed, and several civic buildings looted. Sixteen strikers went to Siberia, 32 to prison, but the strike was successful: the taxes were rescinded. In April 1866 a new electoral system allowed 5 per cent of Tbilisi's citizens (adult males over 25 owning property and paying taxes) to elect a council with its own income and budget. (Councillors were predominantly Georgian noblemen in a city dominated by Armenian tradesmen.) Only the heavy demands of policing, and the supervision of the governor, stopped this council effectively developing Tbilisi. In the 1870s municipal self-government came to Kutaisi, then Gori and Akhaltsikhe (and in the 1880s, Poti and Batumi).

Between 1856 and 1875 an interlude of peace between Russia and Turkey regenerated Georgia. In 1865 there were nearly a million Georgians in a population of 1,300,000: 40 per cent more than in 1832. By 1886 the total was 1,641,000 (Georgians over the nineteenth century declined from 80 to 70 per cent of the total, with a corresponding increase in the numbers of Armenians and Russians). Under Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich, Tbilisi and Kutaisi doubled their populations to 140,000 and 20,000 respectively. By the 1870s, 50 million litres of wine and 200,000 tonnes of grain were produced annually. Georgia's silk industry was ruined by disease that killed the worms and the mulberry trees,[32] but the American Civil War made cotton a profitable alternative. Tea plantations supplied a Zugdidi tea factory. In the southeast German farmers imported Swiss dairy cows. Enterprising peasants and nobles bought land, and by 1874 a Tbilisi Province Gentry's Land Bank was giving mortgages.

Industry and trade could prosper only when communications were improved: by 1864 the demand for lubricating oil and kerosene from Baku's oilfields justified investment in a railway, designed by British and Polish engineers and built by Christian labourers from Persian Azerbaijan, from the Caspian to the Black Sea. In 1871 trains began to run 70 miles inland from Poti; by 1872 Tbilisi was at last connected to the Black Sea. Returning home from Europe in 1873 Naser al-Din, shah of Persia, rode the train from Poti to Tbilisi. (By 1883 the line ran to Baku, but the line was all-weather only in 1890 when a 4 kilometre tunnel was built under the Surami Pass by the Polish engineer Ferdynand Rydzewski.) From 1875 trains ran from Moscow and St Petersburg to Vladikavkaz, from where

Tbilisi was only a day's drive away. Now coal and manganese could be exported; oil, however, was then, as today, the railway's lifeline.

Industrialization, trade, increased bureaucracy, liberated serfs all swelled the cities. Urbanization created a new Georgian working class, and an intelligentsia that patronized bookshops, theatres, discussion groups. Under lighter censorship Georgian newspapers, first weekly, finally daily, appeared, forming Georgian public opinion. *Dawn*, which General Muraviov had shut down, became the leading journal; *Georgia's Herald* gave way to *Droeba* (The Times) in 1866, and in 1877 Chavchavadze's popular journal *Iveria* began a 30-year run. The generation of Russian-educated Georgians responsible for this *risorgimento* were known as *tergdaleulebi*, meaning 'those who drank (or crossed) the River Terek'. Their undisputed leader was Ilia Chavchavadze, who combined a determination to revive Georgian self-awareness with literary genius. Georgian fiction, such as Chavchavadze's *Is he human?!* became fascinating, as well as edifying, reading and superseded for Georgian readers its Russian realist models. Chavchavadze's activities ranged widely: he ran the 'Gentry's Land Bank', whose shareholder meetings became known as the 'Georgian Parliament'. He animated an even more influential 'Society for the Propagation of Literacy in Georgian' which more than any other factor countered Russification and established modern Georgian as a vehicle for public as well as private discourse. Chavchavadze inspired a generation of writers, the most influential being Iakob Gogebashvili, whose *Primer* of 1865 and *Mother Tongue* of 1876 are still every Georgian child's first books.

By the 1870s Russian radicals inspired younger intellectuals to oppose the 'first group' of *tergdaleulebi*. Chavchavadze was a Christian idealist and a unifier, an enlightenment man with no social programme. While espousing liberal causes like abolition of the death penalty, Chavchavadze wanted a Georgia where nobility and peasant lived in mutually supportive patriotic fervour. Younger Georgians, such as Sergei Meskhi and Giorgi Tsereteli, were egalitarian, distrusting aristocracy and Orthodoxy. But neither generation campaigned to restore independence: they envisaged a progressive Russia where local languages and traditions, and universal human rights, would be respected.

Radicalization was slow: Georgians, more than Armenians and Russians, tended to stay rural. As land reform lagged, the late 1870s saw several peasant revolts: villagers in Zugdidi, still paying dues to the Dadiani, took up arms; Svans, alarmed by land surveys, closed off access and killed officers and officials. Rebel villages were destroyed, and ringleaders put on trial, but they were defended in court and in the press by luminaries like Nikoloz Nikoladze and Akaki Tsereteli.[33] Elsewhere, Georgians felt themselves oppressed: three-quarters of the population was Georgian, but Georgians formed fewer than a quarter of secondary school pupils

(Armenians, 10 per cent of the population, formed over a quarter of the school pupils; Russians, 5 per cent of the population – more than a third).

Abolishing serfdom had unpredictable consequences: Jews, once scattered in villages, now congregated in cities like Kutaisi (they began to leave the land in the 1830s when Georgian nobles, such as Grigol Tsereteli of Racha, asked the authorities to make Jewish peasants his serfs). In the town, Jewish tailors, jewellers and shopkeepers prospered, and here they met Ashkenazi Jews, immigrants from Russia and Poland. The Ashkenazis thought Georgian Jews primitive; the Georgians thought Ashkenazis impious. But Georgian Jews awoke to a sense of separateness; the study of Hebrew and Zionism began to spread. So did endemic Russian anti-Semitism: it culminated in April 1878 in an ugly trial in Kutaisi, where Natan Tsitsiashvili and eight Jews were accused of killing and drinking the blood of a child from Sachkhere, Sara Modebadze, for Passover.[34] Fortunately, this blood libel attracted two of Russia's greatest advocates, Lev Kupernik and Piotr Aleksandrov, who, *pro bono publico*, helped secure an acquittal in 1879.

Russian anti-Semitism was not the only provocation during the Viceroy's rule: in 1873 Mikhail Nikolaevich, in a move anticipating the greed of the next generation of grand dukes, appropriated (paying just four roubles a hectare) the Borjomi area, with its valuable mineral waters, forests and resort. (Grand Duchess Olga allegedly inspired this land-grab: notoriously mean, she was reputed to order flowers strewn in her path to be gathered up for fodder in the viceregal stables.[35])

But the grand duke did some good. Georgians, albeit conservative aristocrats, played key roles in his administration. (The grand duke even learnt some Georgian: he dispensed with interpreters when chatting with the peasantry.) His educational policy allowed at least initial teaching to take place in Georgian. He took under his wing the Danish ethnologist Gustav Radde, and together they built and stocked Tbilisi's best institutions – its museum and public library. (Radde was buried on the grand duke's land at Borjomi.)

The end of Mikhail Nikolaevich's rule was marked by the Russo–Turkish war of 1877–8. Russian armies in the Balkans swept all before them, to the alarm of western Europe, but the Caucasian and Anatolian front was at first disastrous. Despite 38,000 Georgian militiamen, anxious to help retake historic Georgian territory, the Turks forced the Russians and Georgians to abandon a siege of Kars, and to leave Erevan and, worse, let the Ottomans land at Gudauta in Abkhazia and thus capture Sukhumi in summer 1877. General Alkhazishvili retook Sukhumi, but found the remaining Abkhaz hostile, even more so when 'hostile' Abkhaz were forbidden to own freehold land.[36] An invasion of Ajaria failed, until Serif-Beg Khimiashvili changed sides and invited the Russians into Batumi. At the

Treaty of San Stefano of April 1878 and the Treaty of Berlin in June, Russia had to give up much of its gains in the Balkans; it could, however, keep its conquests in eastern Turkey: Kars and Ardahan became Georgian cities, while Batumi, the southeast Black Sea's best harbour, which the Russian army entered on 25 August, became a free port under Russian administration. Georgian public opinion was overjoyed to recover its medieval borders and acquire 100,000 'lost' Georgians. But 'war taxes' in Kakhetia roused peasants to burn down the estate of the governor, Prince Vachnadze, in an uprising which ended with 21 Kakhetians being sent to Siberia. In a last tranche of ethnic cleansing, the viceroy 'encouraged' 30,000 Muslim Georgians to leave Ajaria for Turkey.

The assassination of Alexander II in January 1881 finished liberal reforms and the viceroy. Alexander III reversed his father's 'pernicious' and permissive policies, replacing most of his ministers. Russification and centralization were the new policies. Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich was kicked upstairs. Apart from a private visit to Borjomi in 1885, he played no further part in the Caucasus.

19
Reaction and Revolution

✠

Between the executions of Alexander II's assassins and his son's coronation, curious negotiations involved for the first time a Georgian intellectual in Russian state affairs. Ilarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, chief of the new tsar Alexander III's security, in the 1850s a comrade of Mikhail Vorontsov and, after 1905, viceroy of the Caucasus, contacted Niko Nikoladze, a radical journalist and lawyer, with a doctorate from Zürich, a leader of the 'second group' of Georgian intellectuals. Nikoladze was trusted by the People's Will terrorists, by radicals like Alexander Herzen, in Paris and London: Karl Marx once asked him to represent the International in Transcaucasia. But Nikoladze disavowed violence, although he denounced Herzen's rapprochement with Alexander II. He was the ideal go-between to persuade the People's Will, in exchange for amnesties and reforms, not to assassinate the new tsar or his ministers. Nikoladze believed that Alexander III, hidden behind a curtain, silently witnessed his discussions with Vorontsov-Dashkov. A previous go-between had hanged himself after realizing that he was just a decoy to lure terrorists out of hiding. Nikoladze was courageous: he went to Kharkov to see Vera Figner, leader of the People's Will; and in December 1882 he travelled to Paris. Together with K. A. Borozdin, former military governor of Kutaisi, Nikoladze reduced terrorist demands to: freeing one major political prisoner; granting a free press, rural self-government and wide-ranging amnesties; and depositing a million roubles as a guarantee. But the People's Will was in no state to mount further attacks: the police chief, Plehve, met only one condition, releasing the writer Chernyshevsky.[1] Vorontsov-Dashkov told Nikoladze that negotiations were over.

Alexander III then launched a policy of centralization, Russification and repression. The Caucasus was no longer governed by a viceroy, but by generals answering to the minister of the interior. Tbilisi officials now answered to St Petersburg: the first chief ruler, Alexander Dondukov-Korsakov, had served in the Caucasus under Vorontsov, but in 1890 he

was replaced by Count Sheremetev, and in 1896 the new tsar, Nicolas II, appointed General Grigori Golitsyn, who, wounded by Armenian assassins, resigned in 1904. (Neither of these men had any aptitude or desire for the post – Golitsyn, particularly inept, accepted only if his mistress could accompany him.) Georgians were excluded from official posts. District government was reorganized under police officials with a remit to persecute political dissenters.

Georgian, and other local languages, under a policy enforced by Kirill Ianovsky, curator of the Caucasian Educational District, were ousted from the curriculum (except in some parish schools). Any vernacular teaching was designed to prepare children for instruction in Russian and about Russia. Children who spoke no Russian were taught by teachers who spoke very little. In a policy of divide-and-rule, primary education and church services in Mingrelian, Abkhaz and Svan were introduced. Georgians regarded these languages as limited to oral domestic use: giving them literacy seemed a trick to detach outlying provinces and, by introducing the Cyrillic alphabet, to Russify the population. But some Mingrelians, notably Grigol Dadiani, bishop of Mingrelia and Guria, eagerly translated scripture into Mingrelian: not all Mingrelians were (or are) content with a diglossia subordinating their native language to Georgian.

By 1898 Abkhaz church services were held in Church Slavonic, not Georgian, and Georgian was banned from schools in Abkhazia and Samurzaqano. This reactionary policy radicalized Georgian public opinion more than any revolutionary propaganda. Even older luminaries – Ilia Chavchavadze, Dimitri Qipiani, Niko Nikoladze, Akaki Tsereteli – fulminated against aristocrats like General Bagration-Mukhransky who collaborated with the government. Georgian historians reasserted a vision of the kingdom of Georgia, contradicting the version proffered by the Russifiers.

Tbilisi's seminary, almost the sole institution from which a Georgian student could matriculate to a Russian university, became so repressive that many students left with a 'wolf's ticket', black marks for behaviour that barred them from Russia's universities. Consequently, they went to Poland, many to the Warsaw Veterinary Institute, where they learnt more socialist politics than veterinary medicine (although the fiction writer Shio Aragvispireli worked as a slaughterhouse vet in Tbilisi). Others found it cheaper to sail from Batumi to Trieste and study in Switzerland or Germany than to study in Russia.

In this oppression, Georgian émigré centres expanded. Since the eighteenth century, Georgian (and Armenian) Christians in Akhaltsikhe found the Ottomans taking a kindly view of Catholic converts. In 1846 the Santo Lazaro mission in Venice opened a Georgian-language section in its Armenian brotherhood; by the 1880s there was a strong Georgian

Catholic centre in Feriköy, Istanbul, a school and seminary which taught Georgians Latin and French, qualifying them as priests anywhere in Europe. Since opening a seminary in Akhaltsikhe was impossible, the Protestant theological faculty of Montauban, near Toulouse, proved hospitable; three Feriköy monks opened a seminary there. They bought a printing press, were given an even larger press by a French sympathizer, and by 1881 had printed 25 school and seminary books, and even prepared a Latin–Georgian dictionary. The Feriköy centre acquired a four-storey building, a farm to subsidize the school and, with over 100 pupils, became an institute of Georgian higher education rivalling the Tbilisi seminary.[2]

Ianovsky's repression drew fire from the pedagogue Iakob Gogebashvili, and stimulated the Society for Propagating Literacy and, despite censorship, a vocal Georgian-language press. Russification of Abkhazia aroused deep resentment: in 1900 Gershelman, governor-general of Kutaisi, declared the 'uncultured', 'unreliable' Abkhaz had to be 'colonized with a Russian population'. Officials and the conservative Russian press deplored any minority manifesting national pride: when the Georgian flag was waved on stage in a performance of Davit Eristavi's *The Motherland*, the *Moscow Bulletin* caused a furore by advising that the flag should be sold to a circus.

Yet Georgian culture flourished in the 1880s and 1890s. Aleksandre Qazbegi began a decade of frantic prose fiction with *Elguja* in 1884, so popular that the typesetters went on strike when the author tried to kill off his hero; Georgia's greatest poet, Vazha Pshavela, welded Khevsur folklore with Hellenic, Shakespearean, Biblical and romantic elements to create five tragic narrative poems; Ivane Machabeli translated Shakespeare well enough to impress Georgians (who had experienced their own Macbeths, King Lears and Richards III). *Elguja* (although acknowledged by the conservative general Grigol Orbeliani as the first truly popular Georgian novel) was banned for book publication; the journal *The Times* which Machabeli edited was closed for its radical stance. Writers died prematurely. In 1893 Qazbegi died of syphilis at the age of 45; in June 1898, at the same age, Ivane Machabeli left his house one morning and disappeared without trace.

When Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaevich visited Kutaisi in October 1885, he was buttonholed by Dimitri Qipiani, one of Georgia's most venerated figures, a conspirator in 1832 exiled to Vologda, returning to head the viceroy's civil service, become mayor of Tbilisi and finally marshal of the nobility of Kutaisi: Qipiani asked the grand duke if his nephew, the tsar, realized the harm done to Georgia by abolishing the viceregency and by Dondukov-Korsakov's repression of the language. Qipiani was carpeted by the military governor of Kutaisi, but then protested to Dondukov-Korsakov about issuing primers, using the Cyrillic alphabet in Mingrelian,

thus undermining the authority of the Georgian language. Alexander III disliked those he had not personally appointed querying his policies: Qipiani was lucky to escape with a reprimand.

On 24 May 1886 the rector of Tbilisi seminary, the Reverend Chudetsky, who had sent a student to a punishment battalion for two years, was stabbed to death by Ioseb Laghiashvili, an expelled student. The authorities saw this act as Georgian treachery. At Chudetsky's funeral Exarch Pavel anathematized 'the circle and environment which produced bandits like Laghiashvili': these words were excised from the published text, but public opinion heard them as an excommunication of the entire nation. (Laghiashvili, being under 20, escaped the hangman: he was sentenced to 20 years' hard labour on the island of Sakhalin, where he worked as a schoolteacher, before escaping at Easter 1890: he either boarded a ship to the USA, or was murdered by fellow fugitives.) Qipiani wrote an open letter to the exarch, telling him to leave the country he had cursed. Alexander III had Qipiani exiled to Stavropol, where he was murdered in 1887: his funeral in Tbilisi on 16 October was a public demonstration.

Study abroad, and disillusionment in Russian officialdom, produced by the 1890s a sophisticated generation of Georgian radicals who read Karl Marx and Proudhon and reinterpreted Georgia's economics and history. They divided into two camps: the first, social democrats, identified with Russian social democrats and saw a future Georgia inseparable from a liberated Russia in which every ethnos would find self-determination; the second, social federalists, while not seeking independence, let alone a restoration of the Georgian kingdom, wanted Georgian autonomy within a Caucasian state confederate with Russia.

By 1890, when the Surami tunnel opened and an efficient railway connected Batumi to Baku, with branch lines opening up new coal and manganese mines, an embryonic proletariat arose. Men worked in Tbilisi's railway yards and locomotive works, in Baku's oilfields, or at the Rothschild's terminal and oil-drum factory in Batumi. Georgian communities existed outside Georgia: in Baku, Warsaw, Moscow and St Petersburg, where students' unions were formed. These unions held a grand assembly in Kutaisi in July 1892, which gave birth to a semi-secret society, the League for Georgia's Freedom, seeking Caucasian self-determination.

Georgian workmen, unlike European proletarians, often had peasant landholdings to return to; nor did they need intellectuals to inspire them. In the late 1870s they staged successful strikes in foreign-owned factories. Intellectuals had the Society for the Propagation of Literacy and the Phylloxera Society as pretexts for touring the country. (The latter society was necessitated by Vorontsov's introduction of diseased vines from the Crimea: Georgia's vines, like France's, had to be grafted onto phylloxera-resistant American rootstock.) Activists, typically schoolteachers, folk-

lore collectors and veterinary surgeons, opened a tailors' union, beer houses, learnt typesetting, translated political literature – Karl Marx was published in Georgian by 1887.

In May 1894 Silibistro Jibladze, expelled from the seminary for slapping the rector in 1884, was the midwife to a professional Marxist revolutionary group, soon called 'the third group': it produced Noe Zhordania, eventually to become leader of independent Georgia, and Pilipe Makharadze, ideologist of Bolshevik Georgia. Both of them studied and matured in Poland and, on returning to Georgia, collaborated with a peasant and factory worker activist, Evgeni Ninoshvili. The foreign-educated favoured Marxism, while workers in Batumi and Guria preferred practical populism. There were extremists, former seminary students, Lado Ketskhoveli (shot dead in Metekhi prison in 1903) and Ioseb Jughashvili (known as Koba, later Stalin), who favoured secret organization, party discipline and violent or Machiavellian tactics. The authorities' surveillance was hindered by the solidarity of even Georgian nobles with revolutionaries, by officials' ignorance of Georgian, and by the susceptibility of officials to bribery.

Under Alexander III Russia remained at peace: despite stagnation, the population and the economy grew. In 1900 trains ran from Tbilisi via Baku to Europe, with a Pullman carriage to Moscow. (After 1909, taxis crossed the Caucasus to the railhead at Vladikavkaz.) By 1897 Tbilisi had a population of 160,000: by 1913 it had several good parks, nine tram routes and a funicular, eight bridges over the Kura, a clean water supply, a power station, six theatre or concert halls, over a dozen printers. There was the magnificent cathedral of St Peter and Paul, the only public place where Tbilisi's Polish community could legally speak Polish.[3] Kutaisi had 32,000 people, and with the export of silk cocoons to Lyons, became a prosperous city of boulevards: since its population was overwhelmingly Georgian, Kutaisi felt like Georgia's real capital. Even ethnically cleansed Sukhumi became a presentable port city of 8,000. Niko Nikoladze, mayor from 1894, transformed Poti from 'a paradise for frogs', 'the most miserable stop-over for a traveller',[4] into a prosperous port. (Nikoladze owed his success to the Polish botanist Ludwik Młokosewicz, who spent his adult life in Georgia, and popularized planting eucalyptus to drain marshes and repel mosquitoes.) Eighty-five per cent of Georgia's population was still rural, but the country was expanding. Half the population was under 20 years old and as enthusiastic about social equality as about Georgian identity. When in 1896 Chavchavadze's newspaper *Iveria* printed 'Young Iberians', articles attacking the Tbilisi seminary's 'Jesuitical' educational methods, it was closed down for months and thus gained even more authority among younger readers.

Not all government measures were reactionary: in 1891 landless peasants known as *khiznebi* (squatters) were protected from clearances; in

1901 the poll tax was replaced by a tax on land. But other measures were counterproductive. Failure to abolish serfdom completely angered peasants and nobles. In 1902 Gurian peasants refused to pay two roubles annual tax for the clergy (who enjoyed state salaries and charged fees for rites); the boycott spread eastwards. Gurians then stopped paying for their land allotments, and began dispossessing the gentry. An expanding population and limited arable land ensured conflict: in Kutaisi province even nobles might own under 4 hectares, and peasants half that. Taxation and lack of markets discouraged farmers from improving their land. Peasants, particularly from Guria and Racha, became migrant workers: from Vladivostok to Moscow, Imeretians ran station buffets.

General Golitsyn's most idiotic act was in 1903: he confiscated the Armenian Church's land and funds, thus alienating the nation most supportive of Russia, creating a generation of Armenian terrorists and provoking ethnic violence in Tbilisi. Every minister in St Petersburg opposed Golitsyn's move, the prime minister Sergei Vitte remarking that the Caucasus would have to be conquered all over again.[5] But Tsar Nicolas II approved the measure. Golitsyn's slogan was 'coldness and fear', his only relaxation growing roses: his sole advisers were three Russian officers. When Golitsyn received petitioners on Wednesday afternoons, few dared appear, let alone speak, so intimidating was the general. He spread terror in the market when he came to 'restore order'. In July 1904, as Golitsyn and his wife descended from the hills into Tbilisi, three 'petitioners' stopped their carriage: Golitsyn was stabbed in the head; his wife's energetic sparring with an umbrella saved their lives. The Cossack escort was armed only with cudgels (the penalty for losing rifles was so draconian that firearms were locked up in barracks). The Armenian assassins were caught and battered to death a few minutes later, but Golitsyn was so traumatized that he resigned.[6]

Georgia's radicals now organized: in April 1904, at a conference of students and exiles in Geneva, 21 delegates voted into existence a socialist-federalist party to fight for independence within a reformed Russia; social democrats immediately deserted the conference, and merged with the Russian social democratic party. Social revolutionaries, relying on the peasantry, rather than the proletariat, wanting to destroy the old, rather than determine the new, also integrated with their Russian counterparts. A year later, a Georgian anarchist party was formed, but, inevitably, was too ramshackle to rival the three socialist parties.[7]

By early 1905 Russia was in turmoil: losing the war with Japan ruined its finances and confidence; defeated soldiers, striking workers and well-organized revolutionaries paralysed the country. The massacre of Bloody Sunday in January 1905 outside the Winter Palace made the tsar a figure of hate. In Guria, where an agricultural labourers' boycott of 1902 became

a tax strike in 1903, social democrat workers (many Gurians worked seasonally at Batumi oil terminal) overthrew the Kutaisi authorities with a soviet. In 1905 Guria and Imeretia rose up, killing police officials, robbing treasuries, burning estates. On 18 February the dreaded Dagestani general Maksud Alikhanov imposed emergency rule on Guria; nine days later, Alikhanov became governor of Kutaisi, brutally restoring order.[8]

Transcaucasia needed a new approach. Finally Tsar Nicolas II did as the prime minister, Sergei Vitte, and Ivane Amilakhvari and Zakare Chavchavadze (two trusted Georgian generals) had urged for eight years:[9] he named an old Caucasus hand as viceroy. Reluctantly, in May 1905, the frail 69-year-old Ilarion Vorontsov-Dashkov accepted the same plenipotentiary powers as previous viceroys. 'Uncomplicated, but decent and honest', and married to Mikhail Vorontsov's granddaughter, Vorontsov-Dashkov lacked flair, however.[10] He faced not a pacified, benevolent colony, but an inflammable and sophisticated population. Georgians, conservatives or Marxists, had no faith in a revived viceregency; in Tbilisi, proto-fascist nationalist Russians were fighting socialists; many Armenians were now republican revolutionaries. Even the assembly of the Georgian nobility demanded autonomy in April 1905.

Vorontsov-Dashkov foresaw the tsar's capitulation, the Manifesto of 17 October 1905, which granted Russia freedom of speech and assembly and an elected parliament (the Duma). The viceroy, boldly radical, released over 1,000 Armenians Golitsyn had arrested, abolishing restrictions on Muslims and Jews. His motto was 'as much calm and sangfroid as possible': he invited demonstrators to his palace and heard them out. He served peasant rebels food and drink – wine for Gurians, cognac for Muslim Ajarians. He gave his monthly salary of 1,700 roubles to charity. At least the viceroy was not troubled by marauding ex-soldiers, the mainstay of St Petersburg and Moscow soviets: few Georgians fought in the Russo–Japanese war.

All spring, Tbilisi was deluged with complaints about Alikhanov's pacification: mass arrests, courts martial, curfews. Resistance persisted: in April, Prince Pavle Dadiani was murdered and the family forbidden to bury him. Alikhanov was withdrawn. From 1 August 1905 Vorontsov-Dashkov appointed a personal friend to run Kutaisi province: Staroselsky, the 'red' governor, a social democrat agronomist hitherto known for fighting phylloxera, and now, according to Vorontsov-Dashkov, the only cure for the revolutionary spirit infecting western Georgia. The tsar was horrified by Vorontsov-Dashkov's appointing a radical who asked the population to 'serve the new government as you once served the tsar', and said his rightful place was 'hanging from a willow tree'. Staroselsky, to prevent massacres, persuaded 10,000 troops under General Malama to leave Imeretia.

By autumn 1905 Georgia, like most of Russia, was paralysed by a strike of postal, telegraph and railway workers: two locomotives blocked the Surami tunnel, effectively cutting Georgia in two. Guria was again insurgent. By November 1905 the world's first Marxist state, the Gurian Republic, was declared, defended by armed volunteers, every 100 and 1,000 households electing an elder.

Vorontsov-Dashkov faced strife everywhere. But, as Armenian-Azeri massacres spread from Baku to Tbilisi, Vorontsov-Dashkov acted as liberally as Staroselsky: he invited to tea Isidore Ramishvili, the Menshevik leader (soon to be elected to the Duma for Kutaisi and to expel Ioseb Jughashvili-Stalin from the party). Sure that 'somebody with such clear eyes could not be lying', Vorontsov-Dashkov accepted Ramishvili's proposal: to give the social democrats 500 rifles, so that they could be disinterested peacekeepers between Armenians and Azeris. Not only was the tsar horrified: Vorontsov-Dashkov's own garrison Cossacks tried to snatch the rifles back, opening fire and killing several social democrats. Eventually, the social democrats returned some rifles, largely broken ones, but the gendarmerie, the army and the administration feared that the viceroy was a dupe of the revolutionaries.

The situation grew worse: Tbilisi's chief of police was murdered; bombs exploded at the market; shops were boarded up. Imeretia and Batumi saw armed uprisings. The advice of the viceroy's assistant (later, military governor of Dagestan), Major-General Vladimir Alftan, was extreme: deporting entire villages, letting Cossacks fire on demonstrators, and allowing Armenians and Azeris to kill each other. The viceroy conceded only the first point. On 5 December he made General Malama civil and military governor of Tbilisi, and then, at the insistence of his chief of staff General Griaznov, replaced Malama with Alikhanov on 26 December. Alikhanov ruled Tbilisi like a Muslim khan, receiving petitioners personally all week, while imposing drastic measures – forbidding carriages to move fast, having all overnight visitors reported to the police. But in a few days Tbilisi's electricity was restored, schools reopened, and railways operated 'under military control'; striking workers were arrested (and strike leaders court-martialled); householders were told to stay indoors to avoid crossfire.

On 8 January 1906, Vorontsov-Dashkov made Alikhanov provisional governor-general of Kutaisi province. Central Kutaisi was in flames; railway stations all around were robbed and razed. Alikhanov arrested Staroselsky and his Georgian deputy, and sent them to Tbilisi. A week later, the railway was running; Cossacks with machine-guns and cannon travelled west. Alikhanov arrested social democrats, peasants, doctors, teachers, and then assembled large crowds of villagers or townsmen, forcing them to swear allegiance to the tsar, to return stolen weapons, to pay indemnities for

robberies, to hand over deserters and draft-dodgers, and to indicate where agitators and revolutionaries lived, whereupon their houses were blown up by artillery. The country suffered murder, rape and arson: by Cossacks and by rebels. Alikhanov hanged and shot anyone suspected of murdering an official; he shot nine 'delegates', supposedly riding a locomotive to crash it into a military train. Many Gurians were killed; 300 were sent to Siberia. The rest, uncowed, remained adamant Mensheviks. In February Alikhanov gave the inhabitants of Tskhinvali ten minutes to hand over all revolutionaries, stolen money and arms. The crowd kneeled down, pleading ignorance, but paid 1,000 roubles for stolen rifles and pointed out socialists' houses for demolition. Not only peasants and workers were punished: when Prince Tsitsishvili of Kareli in Kartli was slow opening his door, Alikhanov's artillery demolished his house and property.

Relieved by Alikhanov's success, Vorontsov-Dashkov praised him to St Petersburg and let him govern Abkhazia and Svanetia, too: by 20 February Alikhanov had arrested 200 deserters, confiscated 6,300 firearms, and recuperated half a million roubles. But the press in Tbilisi and in Russia denounced the indiscriminate arrests and havoc: Alikhanov was ill attuned to the parliamentary Russia of 1906. The viceroy ordered him to release doctors, landowners, schoolteachers and senior officials. Meanwhile Alikhanov terrorized Mingrelia. The viceroy dismissed him.

Tbilisi was out of control: the viceroy's Cossacks fired on demonstrators, and avenged terrorism, killing dozens of 'curly-haired' civilians. The military governor ordered all attics to be locked and all street-facing balconies to be enclosed, to trap fugitives. On 5 July 1906, believing a bomb had been thrown from Tbilisi's *gimnazia*, drunken Cossacks ransacked the building, broke up a teachers' meeting, smashed the grand piano, and shot dead the deputy headmaster, Shio Chitadze, who was then accused of being the bomber.[11]

On 20 February 1906 Vorontsov-Dashkov held a congress at his palace, the last secure venue in Tbilisi: he asked clerics, journalists, representatives of all communities for solutions to the Armenian–Azeri conflicts: the recommendations were too weak to end the killing. But schoolteaching in native languages was restored, and regional conciliation committees were set up. Vorontsov-Dashkov and especially his wife were perceived by Georgians, Russians and Azeris as too intimate and conciliatory with Armenians, particularly the Church, to whom the viceroy gave back some of the property Golitsyn had confiscated. The viceroy received no gratitude: assassins tried to kill him in August 1905 (in June, his son in-law, Pavel Shuvalov, mayor of Moscow, was murdered; that summer the Vorontsov-Dashkov estates in Tambov province were torched). The exarch Nikolai was also attacked, probably by clerics seeking restoration of Georgian autocephaly: Nikolai was replaced by Nikon, whose inaugura-

tion in August 1906 the Georgian clergy boycotted. Nikon tried to win favour by restoring Mtskheta cathedral, having Tbilisi's senior clergy elected, having seminary courses taught in Georgian, building parish schools, even opening religious-philosophical debates in Tbilisi, as in Moscow, where Christians and freethinkers debated frankly; he financed editions of the Bible in Abkhaz and Ossetian, but Nikon's lack of chauvinism did not placate the autocephalic movement.

Assassinations marked Vorontsov-Dashkov's reign. On 16 January 1906, as he stepped out of his carriage, General Fiodor Griaznov, chief of staff of the Caucasian military district, was blown up by a bomb. Griaznov had openly threatened to 'wipe out' rebels and 'hang the workers'. Ioseb Jughashvili (Stalin) probably organized Griaznov's assassination, and then framed an innocent man to protect the Bolshevik assassin. An Arsena Jorjiashvili (or Joiashvili), who was selling a watch to some drunken soldiers when Griaznov perished, was dragged off unconscious to the gendarmerie. Told to find the murderer within one hour, or face rampaging Russian troops, the authorities hurriedly tried Jorjiashvili: when Jughashvili published leaflets demanding the liberation of 'our comrade from the clutches of the tsar', Jorjiashvili's fate was sealed. He was hanged by a hangman from Baku, since Tbilisi's executioner refused to act. (In 1921 a film was made glorifying Jorjiashvili; Stalin told the director that the real murderer was now a Bolshevik commissar.[12]) In 1906 Stalin was still in his twenties, ending his youthful stage as a Georgian agitator and about to begin a decade of exile, in Russia, Siberia and Europe, that would turn him into a Bolshevik leader.

Ioseb Jughashvili ('Stalin') by the coffin of his first wife, Kato, in 1907. Stalin's mother is next to him; also in the room are the Svanidzes (Kato's sisters, brother and father).

He had outgrown the Georgian and priestly education that made him a teenage poet and a scholarly youth; he was now showing deviousness as terrifying as his propensity to violence, and as willing to see innocent civilians and even fellow socialists killed as Russian 'oppressors'.

On 16 May, as General Alikhanov came to take a train from Kutaisi to Tbilisi, bombs were thrown at his carriage. Shrapnel entered his lung, a Cossack was killed, but Alikhanov caught his train (his wounds were treated when he reached Kartli). Kutaisi's Cossacks beat the station cook severely, burned down the house where the bombers had hidden, and fined the house's owner 20,000 roubles. (Alikhanov, his lung repaired in Europe, later led a Cossack division in Armenia; on 3 July 1907 he was riding in General Griaznov's old carriage when more successful assassins killed him.)

On 13 June 1907 a Bolshevik atrocity shook Tbilisi: Stalin's associate 'Kamo' Ter-Petrosian, an escaped prisoner calling himself Prince Dadiani, led a robbery of 250,000 roubles from a bank carriage in the city centre; the terrorists killed two police constables, three Cossacks and numerous bystanders. (The money was mostly confiscated in Europe when social democrats attempted to change it.) Bolshevik disregard for human life, hitherto typical of Cossacks, alienated most Georgians, and reinforced support for the Menshevik social democrats as humane, if disorganized, revolutionaries. (An even bigger robbery, of 360,000 roubles, but without killings, had been carried out in Dusheti by the social federalist party in 1906.)

The next murder, at noon on 30 August 1907, numbed the nation. Ilia Chavchavadze, respected even by his political opponents, recently elected marshal of the nobility, but a radical opponent of the secret police, the death penalty and Russian rule, was stopped by armed men while driving home to Saguramo near Tbilisi: they shot him and his servant dead and battered his wife's head with rifle butts. The gendarmerie quickly arrested a local prefect, Chavchavadze's coachman and chef, and two others. These six were sentenced to death (their sentences were commuted to hard labour after Chavchavadze's widow pleaded for them). Two men, a village elder and Gigla Berbichashvili, who fired the fatal shots, escaped. Few believed the police's claim that the murder was revenge for a village elder's dismissal: some blamed the secret police; some thought Bolsheviks were responsible; while others believed both sides were in league to eliminate a popular liberal. Subsequent events, however, implicate the Bolsheviks, Stalin and his sidekick Orjonikidze: in 1921 Berbichashvili returned to Georgia as a Red Army soldier and Communist Party district secretary, becoming with Pilipe Makharadze's protection a collective farm chairman. In his sixties, as a Tbilisi department store watchman, Berbichashvili boasted of killing Chavchavadze; on 5 January 1942, when Chavchavadze was 'rehabilitated' in the Soviet canon, Berbichashvili was shot by the NKGB for murdering Chavchavadze on tsarist secret police

orders.[13] (The alleged organizer of Chavchavadze's killing, Dimitri Jashi, spent some time in solitary confinement in Metekhi prison, to protect him from fellow-prisoners;[14] he was later shot by the NKVD, and in the late 1950s was refused posthumous rehabilitation.)

On 28 May 1908, on the stairs of the Synod offices, exarch Nikon was lured by a priest to turn his back, so that an assassin could fire his pistol from the street. Nikon's death was blamed on Georgian clergy, whose unofficial Church Council had been disbanded by Cossack whips on the Exarch's orders. On orders from St Petersburg, 62 Georgian priests, including the three next patriarchs of the future independent Church, were arrested. Vorontsov-Dashkov declared that autocephaly was an idle dream. But the new exarch, Pitirim, an ex-army chaplain, defused the situation by saying prayers in Georgian and Ossetian.

Vorontsov-Dashkov struggled to appease every community, age group and class. In vain he lobbied St Petersburg for a university, pointing out that Georgians sought higher education abroad, and came back radicalized and alienated. Armenians and Azeris wanted a polytechnic, financed by their own communities, where mining agriculture, engineering and economics would be taught. Vorontsov-Dashkov found 300,000 roubles to build an earthquake-proof building. He pressed St Petersburg to allow local government, as in Russia, and recommended giving the Caucasus the dominion status Britain had accorded Canada and Australia, to spare Russia a colonial rebellion.

The tsar had, however, recovered the initiative by spring 1906: the first Duma had proved too radical to propose practicable legislation or compromise with the tsar's ministers. Its social democrat members included Isidore Ramishvili and, fresh from Warsaw's Veterinary Institute, the future leader of independent Georgia from 1918 to 1921, Noe Zhordania: they were promoting radical reform for the whole Russian empire, rather than autonomy for Georgia. In April the Duma was dissolved, and its left wing outlawed, issuing manifestos from the safety of Vyborg (then in Finland); electoral law was changed to make a second Duma reflect the interests of the landowning and professional classes, rather than workers and peasants, of Russians, rather than ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, Georgia sent even more (eight) social democrats and social federalists to the Duma, led by the orator Irakli Tsereteli, who played Aaron to Zhordania's stuttering Moses. In summer 1907 this Duma was dissolved and most social democrats arrested. The third, even more conservative Duma, elected in 1908, had only three Georgians: two social democrats, and one Abkhaz monarchist.

In Russia reaction was marked by arrests and hangings. Vorontsov-Dashkov spared Georgia the horrors inflicted on cities like Odessa, Wilno (Vilnius) and Kiev. But three Georgian social democrat deputies died in Siberian prisons, and Irakli Tsereteli spent ten years in Siberian exile.

Vorontsov-Dashkov shared Chavchavadze's aversion to the death penalty, but could not stop right-wing Russians (clerks, railway workers) of the Union of the Russian People or the Bolsheviks from murdering their enemies. In 1907 and 1908 the Georgian gendarmerie, mitigated by bribery or complicity, deported thousands of suspect socialists to their villages, or to northern Russia or Siberia.

For the first time since 1782, Georgians sought European intervention. The Hague disarmament conference of 1907 received a *Memorandum of the Georgian People* presenting the 1783 *Traktat* as the sole lawful basis for relations between Russia and Georgia. But such secondary issues received only perfunctory sympathy from Europe's major powers. Nevertheless, a precedent was set for later attempts by Georgia to liberate itself from the Russian and Soviet empires.

Vorontsov-Dashkov could be inept. While he restored a modicum of Georgian instruction to schools, and even pointed out the danger of Armenians and Georgians forgetting their own languages in the course of Russification, he belittled Georgian culture, unlike Mikhail Vorontsov in the 1850s, arguing to St Petersburg that literature, even if written in Georgian, 'was thought out in Russian'. Like previous viceroys, Vorontsov-Dashkov tried to manipulate the ethnic composition by importing colonists: when 8,000 Dukhobor dissenters left to find tolerance in Alaska, Vorontsov-Dashkov asked for them to populate ethnically cleansed Abkhazia. He favoured making all land freehold, and in 1907 lifted the 'guilty' slur on native Abkhaz, thus letting them hold land freely. But Vorontsov-Dashkov wanted outsiders to purchase land in western Georgia. By 1907 there were 89 new Russian settlements in Abkhazia and Mingrelia, but the absence of roads, the endemic malaria and hostile remaining aborigines drove most settlers out again; the viceroy then proposed to take settlers from tougher regions, like the Ukraine. (By 1915, 66,000 Russians had 100 new settlements on Georgian soil.) Other measures failed: the tsar would not countenance rural self-government in the Caucasus; the Armenians and Georgians quarrelled over sites for their polytechnic, and work stopped after consecration of the foundations; Vorontsov-Dashkov lobbied in vain for a railway under the Daryal Pass, a route surveyed by the Polish engineer Bolesław Stakowski in 1873, a project mooted many times since.

From 1908 Vorontsov-Dashkov spent the summers convalescing at his estates in Tambov province. He was distressed by nationalists in the Duma, where, in 1908, Vladimir Purishkevich, leader of the Union of the Russian People and Union of the Archangel Michael, accused the viceroy's right-hand man, Nikolai Peterson, of taking bribes and called the viceroy 'so old and weak that he falls asleep at work with a sweet in his mouth'. (Peterson was untouchable: his wife and the viceroy's daughter-in-law were lynchpins of the Tbilisi Tennis Club.) The prime minister Stolypin

abhorred Vorontsov-Dashkov's tolerance of Armenian nationalist *dashnaktsutyun* (federalists). The viceroy retorted that Armenians had to be kept sweet in case of war with Turkey, for which, he warned, Russia was ill prepared. General Alftan was told by St Petersburg's police chief to gather denunciations of the viceroy, who was then tarred as 'anti-Russian, dubious, even red'. The tsar could not yet be persuaded to dismiss Vorontsov-Dashkov, but the 'Caucasian section' of the bureaucracy began countering the viceroy's liberalism.

Financial and police reforms introduced by Vitte and Stolypin reduced terrorism after 1908: Georgia's economy and culture revived. Chiatura's mine exported wagonloads of manganese, although it was cheaper to ship ore from India than down the narrow-gauge line from the mountains; Tqibuli's coal and the old copper seams of Alaverdi and Akhtala gave work, albeit in hellish conditions. Educated and skilled Georgians returned from Europe, sometimes only to herd their fathers' sheep. A new generation of scholars made an impact well outside the Caucasus. The Scots adventurer James Marr, after felling Guria's timber, settled down in old age with a Gurian peasant girl and produced Nikolai Marr, whose proficiency in oriental languages and theoretical daring won him a chair in St Petersburg University and world fame. Georgian politicians were integrated into Russian politics, legal or underground: Karlo Chkheidze and five other Mensheviks were active in the Third Duma; revolutionaries like Stalin flitted between Siberian exile and Viennese cafés. The gendarmerie and revolutionary parties in Georgia now operated by bribery and mutual subversion as much as by violence. The authorities were more worried by fraudulent documents than bombs. Throughout the 1900s a self-taught lawyer and calligrapher, Solomon Ashordia, had fabricated 'proofs of nobility' first for himself, then for untold scores of other commoners: when Ashordia was finally arrested in 1908, cashing a forged cheque for 30,000 roubles in Omsk, the Senate in St Petersburg was trying to sift out the 'Ashordia aznauris' from the genuine nobility.[15] In June 1910 Vorontsov-Dashkov submitted to Tsar Nicolas an upbeat assessment of the Caucasus's economic prospects:[16] industry was expanding, the population had savings accounts, Georgia was producing 50 million litres of wine a year and 100 tonnes of tea, as well as bay leaves, satsumas and bamboo; the viceroy was perturbed only by non-Russians buying estates in Abkhazia and Georgia's still appalling roads.

The Tbilisi Address Book for 1913 reveals that Georgia's problems were ethnic: Tbilisi was an Armenian city administered by Russians. Of 23 bookshops, four were Georgian; of the listed prominent householders, 10 per cent were Georgian. The same applies to Tbilisi's doctors and dentists. Two midwives, and not a single veterinary surgeon or conservatoire music teacher, were Georgians. Even the women teachers in Ermolov's

St Nino Institute were Russian; a Georgian princess, Chavchavadze, was secretary. Only among vintners did Georgians predominate. Georgians were almost unrepresented in the professions, the military and the civil service. Most prosperous Georgians lived off their country estates. Outnumbered by Armenians, disempowered by Russians, Georgians backed the social democratic movement.

Vorontsov-Dashkov believed, and told the tsar in 1913, that the Armenian problem was created by Russia's neglect of their aspirations: he removed all restrictions on Armenian employment and religious freedom. His wife, Ekaterina, often entertained Armenians to tea. Georgians now saw the viceroy as an agent not of Russian imperialism, but of Armenian republicanism. (The German consul, Graf Schulenburg, reported that 'Georgians feel like a discarded mistress now that Vorontsov-Dashkov favours the Armenians'.) The viceroy really was 'old and weak': in 1913 he had a stroke. When war broke out in August 1914, he could not lead the Caucasus. But, faced with invasion by a rejuvenated Ottoman army, many Georgians and Armenians forgot their grievances and rallied to defend the Russian empire.

A new group, however, the Committee for Georgia's Freedom, strongly supported by the nobility, moved its headquarters from Geneva to Berlin just before the war. They formed a Georgian legion to fight alongside the Ottomans, and proposed a government of all parties, including Noe Zhordania of the social democrats, to rule a German-backed independent Georgia. But the left-wing parties thought it 'unrealistic' to foment anti-Russian rebellion at a time of patriotic fervour. Right-wing Georgians were less inhibited: the social federalist Levan Kereselidze (who took part in the Dusheti robbery of 1906) was in Switzerland when war broke out: he was invited to Berlin, together with Prince Giorgi Machabeli, whom the Germans had interned in Brussels. They were joined by Dr Mikheil Tsereteli, an Assyrologist from Heidelberg. On 27 September 1914 Machabeli and Tsereteli submitted to the German foreign ministry a memorandum on neutralizing the Caucasus and establishing a commonwealth consisting of a kingdom of Georgia, Armenian-Tatar cantons and a Highlanders' Federation, whose borders would be demarcated with help from Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey.[17] Negotiations in Berlin led to a German undertaking, in the event of victory, to establish a constitutional monarchy in Georgia, as in Bulgaria, under a western prince. Kereselidze and Machabeli went to Istanbul, where they were joined by two Georgian Catholic priests,[18] with a remit to dissuade Georgians from serving in the Russian army. In German headquarters in Trabzon, Kereselidze had funds and prisoners of war to work with. In 1916, at a Congress of Minority Peoples held in Lausanne, Mikheil Tsereteli, who published a monograph *Georgia and the World War* in French and German, put forward a plan to

oblige Russia to honour the 1783 *Traktat* and thus grant Georgia the same independence it had now promised to Poland.

While Russia's armies had brilliant initial success against Austria on the European front, the Caucasian war began inauspiciously. Attacks on Erzurum faltered for lack of backup in an extreme winter; the Turks counter-attacked, taking back Batumi. Russian forces pushed them back; the Turks switched their forces to defending Erzurum. In December the Ottoman 'Napoleon', Enver Pasha, took over, encircling a large Russian army at Sarıkamış, but a Georgian general, Vasil Gabashvili, broke the encirclement and destroyed the third Turkish army.

Despite Gabashvili's success, public opinion blamed the Sarıkamış encirclement on Vorontsov-Dashkov's obsession with enlarging and protecting Armenia,[19] at the expense of Georgian lands to the west. Karlo Chkheidze complained that the viceroy's wife and her Armenian clique were commanding the troops. When the tsar visited the Caucasus in November 1914, attending separate banquets held by the Armenian and Georgian communities, Vorontsov-Dashkov was in bed. Camphor injections gave him the strength to receive the tsar. At 79, he was allowed in summer 1915 to retire. This coincided with the tsar's disastrous determination to command the Russian army personally and to oust the existing commander-in-chief, his uncle Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, whom he now demoted to become viceroy of the Caucasus.

The tsar was presiding over a chain of catastrophes that would destroy his rule; but Nikolai Nikolaevich's arrival in the Caucasus transformed the fortunes of war. An enormous man on a tiny dappled horse, the grand duke toured Tbilisi, visiting in turn Georgian and Armenian cathedrals, Sunni and Shiite mosques, his hand bleeding from clutching the reins, yelling at his generals. He brought with him his brother Piotr, 200 secret policemen (he distrusted his bodyguards) and a Rolls-Royce for touring the front (100,000 roubles was taken from the military budget to build 4 miles of road to drive the grand duke from his hilltop residence to the Tbilisi highway). He dismissed all Vorontsov-Dashkov's right-hand men (especially the much criticized Peterson) and, appointing Russian novices, kept native Caucasians out of his suite. His command coincided with the capture of Erzurum and Trabzon, due more to the disintegrating Ottoman government, preoccupied by massacring Armenians in eastern Anatolia, than to any brilliant Russian and Georgian tactics. While the grand duke ruled, there were no bombs or assassinations in Tbilisi; nor were there reforms, except dilatory rural self-government. Victory in Anatolia, wounded soldiers and refugees preoccupied the population.

Casualties on the Anatolian front did not destroy morale: some Georgians fought on the bloodier European battlefields; many ended up in Austro-Hungarian prison camps, where some agreed to join the German

or Austrian armies. Only the Khevsurs suffered bad casualties. Pitched against an enemy for whom they had no traditional antipathy, waving swords against machine guns, they were mown down. One late Khevsur heroic poem mourns: 'What's the news in Russia? There's a sin against God. What man of twenty is dying on the frontier? . . . Here the whole Arkhoti valley died.'[20] But death and desertion on the European front, shortages and strikes in St Petersburg and Moscow, precipitated total collapse, and the abdication of the tsar.

20
Independence

✠

On 15 March 1917 Noe Zhordania in Tbilisi received a cryptic telegram from Karlo Chkheidze, the leading social democrat parliamentarian in Petrograd: 'Mr Govermentson [*mtavrobadze*] has died: inform friends relatives.' Zhordania and Isidore Ramishvili immediately went to the viceroy's palace and informed him. The grand duke left on 18 March 1917: he was misled into believing the Provisional Government wanted him to lead Russia's armies on to victory. The Special Transcaucasian Committee (Ozakom), authorized by the Provisional Government, took over the viceroy's palace.

In Georgia's first year of devolved government the question of independence barely arose. Two Georgian social democrats, Karlo Chkheidze and Irakli Tsereteli, played a major part in the Duma and the Provisional Government (Chkheidze chaired first the Petrograd soviet and then the All-Russia Assembly of Soviets, Tsereteli returned from Siberian exile to become Kerensky's minister of the interior). Georgia happily participated in a government, dominated by socialists and liberals, which disowned chauvinism and oppressive policing. Moreover, the Provisional Government's refusal to consider any peace treaty ceding territory to Germany, Austro-Hungary or Turkey safeguarded Georgia (and Armenia) against Ottoman, or even Persian reconquest. The five-man Ozakom that replaced the viceroy had its seat in Tbilisi. It was chaired by members of the fourth Duma: the chairman was a liberal Russian, Vasili Kharlamov, and the other members two Georgians – the social democrat Akaki Chkhenkeli and the federalist Kita Abashidze. (They celebrated by drinking the wine Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich had stored for final victory.) The Ozakom also included an Armenian *dashnak* (federalist), Papajanov; and an Azeri nationalist named Jafarov. In parallel, March 1917 brought Tbilisi the Workers' Council (known later as the Workers' and Soldiers' Council) under Georgia's real leader, Noe Zhordania, who also chaired the Regional Centre of Transcaucasia's Worker, Soldier and Peasant Deputies.

In April the Georgian Interparty Council under Akaki Chkhenkeli, and dominated by socialists, put forward two questions: the boundaries of an autonomous, possibly independent Georgia; the remit of a national parliament (for which they chose the Polish term: Sejm). On the first question they took a magnanimous stance, fraught with future complications: Georgia would be divided into two types of area, indisputable and disputed. Tbilisi and districts with a majority of ethnic Georgians were indisputable territory; districts where Georgians were in the minority would decide by referendum whether to adhere to the Georgian state. Horrified by fragmentation, nationalists retorted that Georgia should hold either the territory of its united kingdom, as it was in 1450, or the territory administered by Russia as Tbilisi and Kutaisi provinces, together with Batumi, Sukhumi and other ancillary districts. On the second question, the council declared that if Russia became a federal state, then Georgia would be an autonomous part, but if Russia became a republic, Georgia would do the same, but associate with Russia under a revision of the 1783 *Traktat*. The Sejm, they felt, should represent all Transcaucasia, but have an economic remit.

While Transcaucasia's politicians talked, Georgia's peasants, Tbilisi's workers and the Russian army acted. The Stolypin reforms that freed the Russian peasantry, making them farmers or farm labourers, had been abortive in Georgia. Peasants now refused to pay redemption charges on land they had been allotted in 1870; they grazed cattle and felled timber on the gentry's land. In the Workers' and Soldiers' Council workers, unlike soldiers, opposed collaboration with the bourgeoisie; Bolsheviks, largely Russian, urged soldiers to desert the front, where exhausted Turks and Russians had fought to a standstill. Demonstrations culminated in a protest march by 4,000 men on 25 June 1917 against a new offensive; the Mensheviks suppressed it.

But as the political and military situation in the former Russian empire worsened, Noe Zhordania was asked to devise a system for electing a popular assembly to deal with actual, not future issues. On 25 October 1917 the Provisional Government in Petrograd, veering between the Soviets' and soldiers' demand for peace at any price and the conservatives' and officers' insistence on war 'to a victorious end', was overthrown by a Bolshevik coup. The Ozakom immediately lost its mandate, and was replaced by the Transcaucasian Commissariat, chaired by a Georgian, Evgeni Gegechkori, and consisting of three Georgians, one Russian, three Armenians and four Azeri. Transcaucasia became an independent federal country, temporarily, most believed, until the Bolsheviks were overthrown by a forthcoming Constituent Assembly and a democratic federal Russia was created.

In Georgia real power moved to the first National Assembly, which met on 19 November: delegates were chosen from the Workers' and Sol-

diers' Council, from every district, ethnic and religious group, and class. Miscellaneous outsiders – Kirion II, the first patriarch of the revived autocephalic Church, General Przhevalsky of the Russian army, Transcaucasian dignitaries and various foreigners – attended. Noe Zhordania was elected chairman. He and his social democrats controlled the national-political section, which declared that Georgian would remain 'orientated' towards a democratic Russia, that for lack of a valid Russian government, every nation of the empire must rule itself. While Georgia would support the Transcaucasian Commissariat and the future all-Russia Constituent Assembly, a Georgian council, proportionally representing the parties, would decide Georgian affairs. The urgent task was determining boundaries with neighbouring states, particularly Armenia and, if civil war broke out, Russia; moreover, Georgia's own constituent assembly had to be set up. A Georgian National Council of 66 members was elected on 22 November: Noe Zhordania chaired the council and its executive committee.

Elections for the all-Russian Constituent Assembly were held in mid-November 1917: the Bolsheviks won only a quarter of the votes, Social Revolutionaries won half. When the assembly tried to meet on 5–6 January 1918, Lenin's troops opened fire and dispersed the delegates. In Georgia the situation turned catastrophic. Red Army troops, ostensibly deserting the Caucasian front to return home, commandeered Georgia's railways and tried to take over Tbilisi and Batumi: Noe Zhordania's government blocked the lines and diverted trains east, flooding Baku with Russian forces.

Britain and France, however, still hoped to revive fighting on the Caucasian front; on 17 December 1917 they announced a Georgian and Armenian brigade.[1] Thirteen French instructors were sent to Tbilisi with twelve million roubles, but tensions between tsarist Cossacks and Georgian troops hindered recruitment; in any case, the American consul Smith and British general Shore, unable to tell Georgian social democrats from Bolsheviks, dithered. Instead, on 18 December tsarist forces agreed a truce with the Turks: the British army was in Iraq, too far away and too small to intervene.

Deserting Bolshevik troops threatened the fledgling Georgian government worse than any Turks: 30,000 soldiers making their way back from Sarıkamış attempted to storm Tbilisi, caused a mutiny in the Gori garrison and in some Kutaisi units: the Georgians accepted Turkish and German help in suppressing them. Baku was in Bolshevik hands in early 1918: a leading Baku revolutionary, Shahumian, came to Tbilisi in February with 30 million roubles for propaganda, and 5,000 weapons to hide in Kutaisi. Social democratic solidarity overrode self-preservation: Noe Zhordania, instead of arresting Shahumian, helped him to flee. (The French consul Nicolas, noting that Zhordania's reforms resembled Lenin's,

except that they were bloodless, reported that 'Georgia is only concerned with independence and doesn't care who runs Russia'.)

Georgian social democrats had no future in Soviet Russia: Karlo Chkheidze returned to the Caucasus and, with other Caucasian deputies to the disbanded Constituent Assembly on 10 February, formed a Transcaucasian Sejm. Events made this Sejm irrelevant within a month. On 3 March 1918, at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Trotsky ceded, on behalf of the Bolsheviks and in exchange for peace, enormous areas of the Russian empire to Germany and Turkey. Without consultation or even warning, Georgia learnt that Batumi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki and recent acquisitions like Artvin, Ardahan, Kars and Erzurum, were now Ottoman territory: a century's reconquest of historic Georgian territory was undone at a stroke of the pen. (A month earlier, the Georgians had told Enver Pasha that they would not fight to retain eastern Anatolia.) The Turks demanded Georgian evacuation within a week. On 1 March Akaki Chkhenkeli led a delegation to Trabzon to negotiate, but the Turks were adamant: Georgia was not a signatory to the Brest–Litovsk Treaty, it was not even a recognized state. On 8 April the Turks invaded: Akaki Chkhenkeli authorized resistance, but Georgia had no forces capable of stopping the Turks taking Batumi a week later. Worse, the Turks then occupied Guria and moved east all the way to the Kura and Borjomi. Encouraged by the Ottoman military, the Transcaucasian Sejm declared Transcaucasia an 'independent democratic federal republic'. They elected Akaki Chkhenkeli as chairman, hoping to negotiate with the Turks. The Turks had three aims: to recover territory conquered by Russia over the last hundred years; to secure the oilfields in Baku and the railway from Batumi leading to Baku; and to encircle the Armenians who were fighting a guerrilla war against their Ottoman oppressors.

Georgia's own minorities rebelled. The Abkhaz set up a National Council in November 1917: they considered themselves members of a federal north Caucasian republic of highland peoples. The new Georgian government, however, dissented, and in June 1918 General Mazniashvili was sent to occupy Sukhumi: Abkhazia was then ruled by Isidore Ramishvili as governor-general; he supervised the election of a malleable Abkhaz National Council. Georgian forces filled the vacuum left by the conflict between Whites and Reds, occupying all the Black Sea coast as far north as Tuapse. The British then came to the aid of the White Russian general Denikin. They persuaded Denikin to recognize Georgia's territory by evacuating Georgian forces south to Batumi and making the river Bzyb the Russian–Georgian border.

Ossetia also asserted itself, withholding taxes from Tbilisi in February 1918, a rebellion which culminated in a bloody assertion of Georgian power in Tskhinvali (where Georgians then outnumbered Ossetians).

Zhordania's government eventually conceded some autonomy to the Abkhaz and to the Muslim Ajarians, but they regarded the Ossetians as Bolshevik puppets, a self-fulfilling suspicion which created further repression, a Bolshevik enclave near the Russian border and (as in Abkhazia) gravitation towards Soviet Russia.

Transcaucasia needed outsiders to fend off the Turks, but the Armenians favoured the British, the Georgians the Germans, while the Azeris still saw the Ottomans as Turkic brothers. All attempts by Armenians, Georgians and Azeris to devise a constitution foundered on this difference of orientation. Negotiations with the Turks in Batumi only worsened the situation: Akaki Chkhenkeli reported in desperate secret letters in mid-May 1918 that the Turks now demanded nearly all Erevan province, the use of all Transcaucasian railways, and control of law and order throughout Transcaucasia: if refused, they would use force. (The Turks, however, administered Batumi liberally, treating it as a free port, using French and Russian to communicate with the inhabitants.) On 4 June, in exchange for recognition of statehood, the Georgians signed away to Turkey virtually all southwest Georgia. The Turks held a referendum purporting to show that a majority in favour of annexation, and then demanded annexation of the eastern part of Kakhetia (modern-day Saingilo) bordering Azerbaijan.

The salvation for Georgian social democrats was to use the good connections and presence of their conservative colleagues in Germany, Turkey's ally, and thus mitigate Turkey's intransigence. Chkhenkeli was authorized to negotiate with General Otto von Lossow, who confirmed his worst fears; Turkey and Soviet Russia were about to conclude a secret alliance which could annihilate Georgia as a political entity. Germany, making a frantic last push to defeat France and Britain, was desperately short of oil and material for steel-making; access to Georgia's mines and railways would give it the munitions, rare metals and fuel to win the war on the western front: even more than for Turkey, for Germany in 1918 access to Georgia was a matter of life and death.

General Ludendorff, head of the German army with Field Marshal von Hindenburg, selected a Bavarian general, Freiherr Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, to head a military mission to Georgia. Kress had a formidable reputation as a determined, but humane fighter in the Middle East. Kress had command over all German authorities in the Caucasus, including Graf Schulenburg, who had been consul in Tbilisi. Schulenburg, 'fond of alcohol and women', was well liked in Tbilisi and well informed. For Ludendorff, Georgia would be an ideal springboard for an attack on British India, once the British had been expelled from France.[2]

In Berlin Prince Machabeli pressed the Germans to make Batumi a free port, and arranged to accompany Count Mirbach, German ambassador

General Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein (1870–1948), head of the German military mission to Georgia of 1918.

to Moscow, to force recognition of Georgian independence. Nevertheless, on 14 April General Gedevanishvili took his 3,000 men out of Batumi, and to British despair and German disapproval, the Turks moved in. Count Schulenburg tried to negotiate a treaty by which Batumi and the railway to Baku should be four-sevenths German, two-sevenths Transcaucasian and one-seventh Turkish, and warned the Turks to ease the pressure on Tbilisi.[3] As a popular, rather than social, democrat, Chkhenkeli had always maintained that Georgia needed to be oriented to western Europe, and now his view convinced all the other factions. On 22 May he sent a letter from Batumi to Tbilisi urging an immediate declaration of an independent republic: 'Nobody's ever founded a state without risk! You need daring and more daring!' On 28 May, on the *Minna Horn,* moored off Poti, Chkhenkeli signed a treaty with General von Lossow, in which the Germans promised to lobby for recognition of Georgia's independence. Chkhenkeli then travelled with Lossow, Nikoladze (the mayor of Poti) and Zurab Avalishvili to Berlin. Here they discussed bringing Georgia as a 'dominion' into the German Reich, an idea which the Kaiser vetoed. Conversely, Chkhenkeli ruled out the recruitment of Georgians for the German army. Even the Workers' and Soldiers' Council accepted that a

German protectorate was the newly independent state's only hope. At 10 a.m. on 26 May the Transcaucasian Sejm wound itself up; at noon the Georgian National Assembly declared Georgia sovereign, under Noe Zhordania's presidency.

Effectively a one-party government, in which Noe Zhordania became also prime minister (supplanting Noe Ramishvili, who remained interior minister), the social democrats proved unexpectedly efficient and generally tolerant (freedom of the press allowed Noe Zhordania to be portrayed as a billy goat without retribution). Over the next three years they enacted an enormous amount of sophisticated legislation, which would have made Georgia one of the most egalitarian and free states in the world, if only the government had the money, expertise, time and peace in which to implement it. Institution followed institution: a state university, a national art gallery, magistrates' courts, a supreme court, local elected officials, multi-party city administrations. The Bolshevik revolution and world war had destroyed Georgia's trade: inflation between 1918 and 1920 meant that a five kopeck postage stamp gave way to a 50 rouble stamp; employment, agricultural and factory production fell catastrophically. The state spent four times its income, which it covered temporarily by issuing currency 'vouchers' that maintained parity with the rapidly depreciating Russian rouble.

On 4 June the Turks forced Georgia to capitulate: General Kress had to land in Poti, not Batumi. Germany protested at its ally's overstepping the Brest–Litovsk treaty. The Turks gave into German pressure and agreed to respect Georgia's ethnic borders, and to cede control of the railways to Germany. Possession of Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki was to be settled by negotiation and referendum. On 10 June German troops entered Tbilisi. In July they took over from the Turks all Georgia's ports and railways: that year a joint-stock company with a 30-year monopoly exported some 300,000 tonnes of manganese from Chiatura to Germany and the royalties brought the Georgian government much-needed currency. Fifty-four million Deutschmarks were lent, albeit at a usurious rate, to back Georgia's currency. Large credits were given to develop Poti port, and a number of projects were planned including a cable across the Black Sea, and an oil pipeline from Batumi to Poti.[4] On 27 June the first consignment of manganese left Poti for Germany, but the shortage of dockers, and the undernourished, strike-prone state of those that did work, left more manganese behind than could ever be shipped. Similar blockages prevented the export of Abkhaz tobacco, highland wool and Kakhetian copper, or the import of much-needed flour. The German mission found Tbilisi suffering from dire shortages of everything from oil to nails, glasses, electric lamps and socks. The government could collect no taxes or excise. Outsiders, such as stranded Russian officers, were dying of hunger. Moreover,

inflation had made the tsarist or Kerensky Russian rouble almost unacceptable as payment. Only Tbilisi's opera and theatre flourished, playing to full houses.

Overcoming Georgian suspicions, Kress von Kressenstein won, despite his distaste for social democracy, respect not only from Tbilisi's 6,000-strong German colony: he realized that émigré nationalists such as Prince Machabeli and Mikheil Tsereteli, who had hoped Germany would overthrow the socialist government, had no backing in their country. But Kress was perturbed by the absence of competent civil servants, the indiscipline of soldiers and dock and railway workers, and in July 1918 forced the Georgian government to reinstate the death penalty and set up 'political' police and courts martial. He had no patience with the socialist 'national guard', which elected its officers and fought on a six-hour day: it protected the revolution, not the country. Kress insisted that a regular disciplined army, even though its officers would be tsarist and some of its men Bolshevik, be formed, before Germany supplied finance and munitions. Zhordania could not keep his promise to integrate the two forces into one single army. After seeing German soldiers parade down Golovinsky Prospekt (today's Rustaveli Avenue), Mikheil Tsereteli asked for German troops to restore order. On the other hand, Kress established a German gymnasium in Tbilisi, revived Tbilisi's anti-socialist German newspaper *Die kaukasische Post*, and offered scholarships to German universities. Kress and von Schulenburg won popularity by urging that land confiscated from the nobility should not be nationalized, but handed to the peasantry. They suffered two failures: to convert Georgian locomotives from Azeri oil to local coal, and to deport several thousand stranded Russian soldiers, a major destabilizing element, to the Crimea.

There is no doubt that, by stiffening the administration and forming a regular army, in autumn 1918 the German military mission saved Georgia from internal chaos and from Turkish invasion and Armenian encroachments. But, after losing Baku to the British, the Ottoman empire imploded in October, and Bulgaria could fight no longer. A wave of flu disabled every foreign adviser in Tbilisi. Then in November Germany collapsed and sued for peace. German troops in Tbilisi became an undisciplined rabble. Georgia realized it had backed the wrong horse.

Thanks to the Treaty of Mudros (on Lemnos) of 30 October, the British and French forced Turkey to hand back to Georgia much of their Transcaucasian annexations. In early December a French lieutenant and three British majors arrived in Tbilisi, followed by troops, including Indians, to the Germans' and Georgians' shock. The German headquarters, the Palace Hotel, was burned down, and on 23 December German forces began to leave Tbilisi. On 4 January 1919 a British battalion landed at Poti. While the Georgian government held a banquet for the British military

mission, the war minister gave Kress a farewell dinner. Batumi and Georgia's railways were now taken over by the British, who took a dim view of Georgia's concessions to Otto von Lossow. The sole British aim, however, was to prevent any enemy, now Bolshevik Russia, taking control of the Baku oilfields: what happened to Georgia mattered little to General Cooke-Collis, who appointed himself governor-general in Batumi and was thwarted when Georgians he appointed to help run the city went on strike. (Kress von Kressenstein and his men lingered on until February 1919, treated by General Cooke-Collis as no better than prisoners of war.) As German forces left for Poti, the Georgians asked the British for permission to recruit them: the mutual sympathy between Germans and Georgians, especially given the arrogant contempt shown by the British, was now such that the Armenians openly expressed envy. The Georgians never forgot the water supply and the scholarships that the Germans provided in their six months' occupation.

The independence of Georgia (and of Azerbaijan and Armenia) was by autumn 1918 compromised by British determination to keep Baku's oil out of Soviet or Turkish hands, and therefore to control Transcaucasian railways, and also by the White general Denikin's volunteer army, which now controlled the north Caucasus and opposed new states that might impede the restoration of the Russian empire. The British supported Denikin and other White generals in their campaigns against the Bolsheviks – which looked hopeful until the end of 1919. But the British conceded that Georgia was a viable and stable state. Armenia was split between warlords and parties, some dreaming of an empire from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean; Azerbaijan's governments could not rule an anarchic mix of Bolshevik Russians, nationalists, Islamists and Armenians. In the post-war order, the Germanophile Chkhenkeli was replaced as Georgian foreign minister by the French-speaking Evgeni Gegechkori. The British Foreign Office's Eastern Committee squabbled about what to do in the Caucasus. Arthur Balfour, foreign secretary under Lloyd George, was horrified by the expense. Only Lord Curzon, foreign secretary after 23 October 1919, thought the Caucasus of strategic interest, and insisted on controlling the Batumi–Baku railway; Churchill, as war minister, wanted only to strengthen anti-Bolshevik forces. Wartime promises of self-determination were forgotten except by junior idealists in Britain's civil service.

Georgians, however, had no fondness for the British, whom they welcomed only as protectors from Russia, Bolshevik or anti-Bolshevik, once the Germans withdrew. The republic was besieged by territorial claims, the most outlandish from Armenia, which disputed not only the mixed, or ethnically Armenian borderlands of Lore and Javakheti. On 18 October Armenia demanded Tbilisi and inner Kartli up to Gori, as well as Batumi. Armenia declared war on 20 December, seeking Akhalkalaki and Lore,

advancing to 30 miles from Tbilisi. The Georgians kept Akhalkalaki, and were saved by British troops occupying the conflict zones in Lore and Borchalo, imposing a truce by 31 December. Georgian forces aimed, however, to reclaim Batumi, a 'free city' under General Cooke-Collis, to which only unarmed citizens had access. (Tsarist diplomats from the 'government' in Ufa in central Russia and from Denikin's Cossacks also claimed Batumi.) Cooke-Collis threatened to close Batumi to Georgians, and to deport striking workers to India. As Denikin's forces moved south down the Black Sea coast, Noe Zhordania again needed British help to demarcate a border in Abkhazia; in return he promised to ban anti-British articles in the Georgian press. Georgian officials arrested Abkhaz politicians, despite the demurral of British observers such as General Briggs in Tbilisi. (General Denikin's telegram to Generals Milne and Forestier-Walker of 1 February 1919 probably reflects the truth: 'The Abkhaz people . . . were forced to ask the Georgians for help against the Bolsheviks. Taking advantage of this, the Georgians have brought their troops into Sukhumi district . . . and have conducted the most ruthless oppression of leading influential Abkhaz politicians.') By March 1919 General Beach of British Intelligence occupied a fine house in Tbilisi, and a Colonel Rawlinson inspected the country's borders and capacity for self-defence. Rawlinson disparaged the social democrats ('everyone losing property, nobody gaining it') and the army ('indifferent bodies of cavalry' under 'swaggering officers').[5]

Georgia's two best known social democrats, Karlo Chkheidze and Irakli Tsereteli, appealed for help, attending, uninvited, the Paris Peace Conference. This was for the British 'an unexpected and unpleasant development'; the two men were diverted to the Prinkipo Islands off Istanbul, where a section of the conference was debating the shape of a non-Bolshevik Russia. Nevertheless, Chkheidze and Tsereteli reached Europe, but could submit only a written memorandum to the conference. From March 1919 to December 1920 Chkheidze's delegation sought recognition in Paris for Georgia. The victorious powers understood Georgia's strategic, even economic importance, but, given Transcaucasia's instability and Soviet Russia's encroachments, withheld recognition. Many, including the American secretary of state Bainbridge Colby, foresaw relations with a Soviet Union that replicated territorially the old Russian empire, and therefore would recognize no breakaway states, not even in the Baltic.

Georgian views were dismissed as too 'rosy' by the British, who had in March 1919 decided to withdraw from the Caucasus; Churchill wanted Georgia to revert to Russia after the Bolsheviks were crushed. Only later, when the White offensive collapsed, and the Bolsheviks reached the lower Volga, and thus the Caspian and the Baku oilfields, did the picture change. The British decided to let the Italians, hungry for oil and coal, become the protector power. A mission under Colonel Gabba, with eager Georgian

Oliver Wardrop, British High Commissioner in Tbilisi 1919–20.

assent, visited Tbilisi in April, and the British delayed departure until May. Gabba negotiated monopolies, 20 per cent kickbacks on all contracts for timber, coal and hydroelectric power, arranged to resell his exports to Germany, and asked his government for 40,000 troops to hold down the new mandate.[6] The government of Francesco Nitti was horrified by the cost and the certainty of upsetting Russia, Bolshevik or non-Bolshevik: Gabba was disavowed. The Georgians now asked the British to stay: seeing the danger of Soviet advances, they agreed.

In summer 1919 the British sent Oliver Wardrop to Tbilisi as Transcaucasia's high commissioner, with just three assistants. Wardrop was much loved: in the 1880s and 1890s, as consul, he had learnt not only Georgian, but also Svan, and produced translations of Georgian prose and a panegyrical book about Georgia;[7] his sister Marjory, who died in 1909, was the English translator of Rustaveli's *The Man in the Panther's Skin*: she make the world aware of the riches of Georgian poetry. Wardrop did much to mitigate the humiliation of yet another occupation. But he was not the Foreign Office's first choice, being starry-eyed about creating three pro-western democratic anti-Bolshevik republics, all living in peace within agreed borders. During Wardrop's stay, the British military surgeon in Tbilisi was murdered by a Bolshevik. In November 1919, to mark the second anniversary of the Soviet revolution, Bolsheviks rose up; in the

ensuing repression Zhordania's government executed 300 and imprisoned 1,000 ('criminals and deserters paid by foreigners,' reported Wardrop). Wardrop believed that he was saving Georgia from a Jewish conspiracy to enslave all Christianity. When Wardrop quoted the prophet Zechariah to Lord Curzon, 'I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah and will smite every horse of the people with blindness,' he lost all credibility.[8] Vicious Azeri–Armenian fighting, which let the Red Army at the end of 1919 move from the north Caucasus and take over Azerbaijan in February 1920, discredited Wardrop. Churchill lambasted him for diverting support from Denikin's army. The British benefited little from their occupation: no London bank would invest in Georgian hydroelectric stations; firms such as Forward and Sellar had to join with the Georgian state monopoly to exploit Georgia's manganese; Batumi, even under a British general and Indian troops, functioned so poorly, its postal and dock workers extortionate strikers, that exports and imports stopped. The British wavered. The Peace Conference was recommended, and Denikin was ordered, to recognize de facto Georgia and Azerbaijan. Wardrop was set an impossible task: to get all three Transcaucasian republics to agree borders by February 1920. The British left Tbilisi in September 1919. The Italian consul urged Georgia to push the British out of Batumi, just as D'Annunzio had thrown the Yugoslavs out of Fiume (Rijeka) the previous October. Despite riots in January 1920 (after rumours the British would hand Batumi to Turkey), Cooke-Collis held on to Batumi. Armenia also claimed access to the city.

As the Red Army advanced down the Black Sea, Batumi was flooded by retreating White soldiers: the Georgians had to be compelled to let them cross Mingrelia. Sergo Orjonikidze boasted that the Red Army would be in Tbilisi by 15 May. A Bolshevik-inspired Ossetian uprising was put down with great bloodshed. The British decided to stay in Batumi. In May 1920 General Milne ordered all Georgian forces out of the city; a month later Colonel Stokes handed Batumi over to Georgia, after Georgia threatened an armed repossession. Relief, for the optimistic, came on 7 May, when the Soviet government, represented by Sergei Kirov, the new Russian negotiator, and a friend of Joseph Stalin, offered Georgia recognition and a peace treaty, in exchange for the Georgian 'Revolutionary Committee's' freedom to operate. The Polish invasion of the Ukraine had altered the military situation: Lenin needed peace on his southern borders. The Soviet–Georgian treaty was a pretext for the British to cut their losses and leave. (A carriage carrying Georgian fiancées of British officers was, without warning, detached at night from the evacuation train; just one of these Georgian 'princesses', an Amirejibi, hidden in an officers' carriage, married her British fiancé. Their son, Richard Amirebji, eventually returned to Georgia and married the scholar Mzekala Shanidze.)

The Paris Conference brought Georgia nothing. Led by Germanophiles Akaki Chkhenkeli and Niko Nikoladze, another Georgian delegation sought support from Berlin and was again promised recognition and mediation with Russia. In September 1920 Colonel Stokes arranged for the foreign minister Evgeni Gegechkori to lobby Rome and London, where he was kept waiting a month for an audience. Governments were reluctant to support Georgia, but Europe's non-Bolshevik socialists were eager. H. G. Wells's friend Odette Keun published an ecstatic appreciation of Georgian males and Georgian power;[9] in September 1920 a socialist delegation, including Ramsay Macdonald and Karl Kautsky, toured Georgia and addressed its parliament. By then, Britain hinted at recognition if Georgia did not confront Soviet Russia, and if most of Europe conceded de facto recognition. *De jure* recognition was deferred, however, until 1921, posthumously in effect. Evgeni Gegechkori lobbied the League of Nations in vain: only ten countries (and of the major powers only Italy) voted to include Georgia: sixteen votes were needed.

After 7 May 1920 some hoped that Lenin would concede Georgia the freedom he had conceded the Baltic states and Finland. Georgia's treaty with Soviet Russia met Britain's requirements for recognition, but left undiminished the threat to Georgia's existence posed in April 1920 when Azerbaijan was invaded by the Red Army. (Armenia, after its territorial claims were supported by the USA, had a disastrous war with Turkey, and would fall to the Red Army in November 1920.)

In mid-1919, however, under benevolent British oversight, independent Georgia blossomed. 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive . . .' Despite inflation and the collapse of trade, compared with war-torn Russia, Georgia was secure. The Georgian parliament denationalized remaining crown lands: peasants became farmers. There was a cultural renaissance in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi: Russian actors, painters and poets – Osip Mandelstam, Ilia Zdanevich – sought refuge from cold, hunger and the dreaded Cheka with Georgian artists – Davit Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili. Georgian, Russian, even Armenian, Azeri and Persian culture fused. Poets who in Paris had consorted with Apollinaire and Picasso recreated Parisian life in Tbilisi's *Fantastic Little Inn,* in exhibitions, concerts and in countless, short-lived magazines.

The cultural activity was all the more frenetic for omens of imminent disaster. The Soviets had set up, on Lenin's and Stalin's orders, a Caucasian Bureau under the Bolsheviks Sergo Orjonikidze and Pilipe Makharadze. Zhordania and his minister of the interior, Noe Ramishvili, arrested the most dangerous: Stalin's comrade, the bandit Kamo Ter-Petrosian; the future Chekist Tite Lortkipanidze; and assassins targeting leading generals. In the first half of 1920, there were 87 Georgian, 88 Russian and 49 Armenian political prisoners; 749 foreigners were declared *non grata*. Death sen-

tences were carried out in Ozurgeti,[10] Ramishvili complaining that White Russians changed into Bolsheviks, and vice versa. But the exchange of ambassadors in May 1920 between the Bolsheviks and the Georgians undermined security: the Soviet ambassador insisted that gaoled subversives like the young Lavrenti Beria had to be released, and Russian security forces organized a fifth column of Georgian Bolsheviks. The Soviets refused to accept Bolsheviks whom Zhordania deported from Georgia. Felix Dzierżyński, Lenin's chief of secret police, urged a violent overthrow of the Georgian Mensheviks. Russians in Batumi and Sukhumi formed anti-Georgian unions; armed Bolsheviks even took over districts, like Dusheti, near the Russian border. Georgian Bolsheviks, particularly demobilized peasants, rebelled in provincial towns. In May 1920 Orjonikidze had a general murdered in Batumi: the killer, when caught, was released by the British for negotiations. Stalin and Orjonikidze ordered Gekker, commander of the 11th Red Army, to prepare for invasion. Gekker drew up a detailed plan, warning his army that the Georgians were 'capable of serious resistance if the Red Army ever lost the initiative'.[11] In November 1920 Georgian Bolsheviks met in Baku to plan a coup.

By December 1920 Georgia was virtually surrounded by Bolshevik states: its one other international border was with Atatürk's Turkey, about to conclude a pact with Soviet Russia. Georgia lacked the friendly neighbours, let alone internal solidarity, that enabled countries like Finland to stay free. In October, after the Armenian–Turkish war, Turkey seemed poised to capture Batumi. Russia's civil war was coming to an end, and Poland's invasion of the Ukraine was being repelled. Europe and America were abandoning intervention: disillusioned in the White armies, they were considering recognizing the USSR and trading with it. Lenin and Stalin could safely crush Georgia.

The Soviet pretext for war was the 'neutral' zone of Lore between Armenia and Georgia, which Georgia was due to vacate on 13 February 1921. Sergo Orjonikidze organized a 'spontaneous' uprising by 'Georgian' workers and Russian settlers in Lore to mask an invasion by 36,000 infantrymen of the 11th Red Army under Commander Gekker. Zhordania immediately had Shteiman, the Soviet ambassador, arrested. The Georgian army, split between regular forces, whose officers had served the tsar and got on badly with the social democrat government, and the unruly national guard, had a quarter of the infantry and artillery, and a tenth of the cavalry of the invaders. Zhordania thought he could muster 100,000 men, but he had too few rifles or boots. The French promised supplies, but no shipload reached Batumi until 6 March, when everything was over. General Kvinitadze asked rhetorically how the Russians had mustered 155,000 Georgians in 1914, and yet he had only 10,000 men.[12] (The reply would have been that a quarter of these men were killed, a

quarter were in POW camps, and most others reluctant to fight again.) Nevertheless, on 16 February at the river Khrami, southeast of Tbilisi, General Kvinitadze stopped the Red Army, killing 530. Over the next week, despite taking 1,600 prisoners and repelling several attacks, the Georgians were reduced to a semicircle about 20 miles in diameter around Tbilisi. The national guard often refused to fight, or to give its armaments to the professional army. Using five armoured trains, the Bolsheviks closed the semicircle and, on the 25th, to avoid Tbilisi being shelled or their own forces being encircled, Generals Kvinitadze and Odishelidze (each later blamed the other) advised Noe Zhordania to retreat. More Russian troops entered from Azerbaijan, across the snowbound Mamison Pass into Racha and Kutaisi, and down the Black Sea coast to Sukhumi and Poti. Sukhumi was taken by the Abkhaz leader Nestor Lakoba for the communists; South Ossetia declared itself Bolshevik. The Turks took advantage of the Menshevik nemesis by demanding the secession of Ardahan and Artvin.

On 24 February Noe Zhordania's government took a train to Kutaisi and, a few days later, to Batumi. The night before their departure, on the advice of the French high commissioner Abel Chevalier, Georgia's last staunch diplomatic supporter, they authorized Professor (now St) Ekvtime Taqaishvili to save Georgia's treasures from the Bolsheviks (who were notoriously, under a committee led by Stalin and Trotsky, smashing and scrapping Russia's church treasures): the contents of the state museum and art gallery and of Tbilisi's churches were crated up and put on a train westwards. The Soviet foreign minister, Chicherin, warned the British 'to keep out of it' and, 'scandalously', said the French, they did so. Zhordania still hoped for a negotiated peace. On 12 March, after Taqaishvili had collected the treasures of Zugdidi, Kutaisi, Borjomi palace and Gelati monastery, Zhordania tried to telephone Moscow, but could not get through.

On 17 and 18 March Zhordania sent his adjutant and war minister Grigol Lortkipanidze up the branch line to Kutaisi to negotiate with three Bolsheviks: Stalin's brother-in-law Aliosha Svanidze, Stalin's close friend Abel Enukidze, and the future first secretary of the Transcaucasian Communist Party, Mamia Orakhelashvili.[13] They demanded Menshevik capitulation: Lortkipanidze refused. The Bolsheviks then admitted a common interest in stopping the Turks, who had taken Artvin and Ardahan, from grabbing Batumi: Lortkipanidze needed a port to evacuate his government; the Bolsheviks needed to land reinforcements. The Mensheviks agreed to let the Red Army enter Batumi as a friendly force to expel the Turks, but the Mensheviks would retain control of the railway for 70 miles north of Batumi, provide wagons for the commander Zhloba's Bolshevik cavalry and release all Bolshevik prisoners in Batumi (including Sergo Kavtaradze, who would be Stalin's longest-serving diplomat). The Bolsheviks apparently also promised subservient Mensheviks

participation in government, and an amnesty for acts committed in the course of duty.

There was no need to invite the Red Army into Batumi: General Mazniashvili had driven out the Turkish vanguard on his own. Moreover, the Georgian Mensheviks had the sympathy of Aristide Briand, then French prime minister and minister of foreign affairs: their escape was safeguarded by three French ships that shelled Bolshevik troops moving down the Black Sea coast to Poti. On 11 March the French cruiser *Ernest Renan* took the government archives and church treasures (an act prohibited by the agreement with Enukidze) for transhipment in Istanbul onto a hospital ship sailing to Marseilles. Two French ships and one Italian took the Georgian government, some of the military and other refugees to Constantinople.

Independent Georgia's last business, on 21 February, was the Constituent Assembly's enactment in Batumi of Georgia's constitution: four days later Sergo Orjonikidze sent from Baku a telegram to Lenin: 'Over Tbilisi flies the red flag of Soviet power. Long live Soviet Georgia!'[14] Tbilisi's streets were empty: people streamed southwards to Kojori and Tabakhmela battlefields, bringing back their corpses for burial and a eulogy from Patriarch Leonid. The Cheka attacked mourners, but were beaten off, while Red Army soldiers looted the hungry city's shops and houses.

The Turks attempted to annexe Batumi on 17 March, but their 2,000 men were easily repelled by 10,000 Georgians. Some officers, notably General Mazniashvili, stayed in Batumi to fight off the Turks and then offered to serve Soviet Georgia. The next day the Soviets entered Batumi, and on the 22nd the Turks opened negotiations.

21
Soviet Annexation

✠

In the wake of the Red Army came a flood of Russian and Georgian party officials and members of Cheka (secret police): their task was to dismantle the fledgling Georgian democracy. Georgia was declared a 'Soviet Republic'. For want of Soviets, all districts were controlled by unelected Revkomy (Revolutionary Committees); the supreme Revkom was chaired by Pilipe Makharadze, who sent a backdated request from Georgia's workers and peasants for Soviet help. (Makharadze's Revkom repatriated other Georgian exiles, notably Mamia Orakhelashvili who would dominate the Georgian communists for a decade, and the one-legged Aleksandre Gegechkori, whose niece the Chekist Lavrenti Beria would marry.) Makharadze answered to Sergo Orjonikidze in the Russian Central Committee's Caucasian Bureau.

The Bolshevik regime attempted in weeks what had taken three years in Russia. On 24 March 1921 the Georgian Constituent Assembly was dissolved, followed by the law courts. In April all land was nationalized as the property of the 'working people', that is, the Revkom. The Georgian Orthodox Church was proscribed, its patriarch and autocephaly disavowed. The supreme Revkom appointed People's Commissars to replace Menshevik ministers. A Georgian Red Army was formed; in May Georgia and Russia were declared 'allies'. At the end of 1921 Soviets were to be 'elected', non-worker elements and non-Communist parties disenfranchised: by March 1922 Georgia would be a 'Soviet Socialist Republic' with a 'Central Executive Committee' under Pilipe Makharadze.

The next stage of dissolving the Georgian state required forming 'autonomous republics'. In March 1921 Orjonikidze staged discussions in Batumi with Abkhaz Bolsheviks. At first Abkhazia was an 'independent Soviet republic'; within months, at Stalin's insistence, Abkhazia reverted to autonomy within Georgia. The autonomy of Ajaria, with Batumi as its capital, was, however, dictated by the Turks, who dropped their claims in the Soviet–Turkish treaty of March 1921, provided that Ajaria retained

special status. Ajaria on 16 July 1921 became an autonomous Soviet republic governed by a *mejlis* (regional assembly). Granting autonomy to south Ossetia, where Georgian and Ossetian villagers lived together, was trickier. Under the Mensheviks, Graf von Schulenburg had mediated between Georgians and Ossetians when south Ossetians demanded union with Soviet North Ossetia. Soviet divide-and-rule policy ignored Ossetian unity: a large area of Ossetian-settled land between Racha and Kartli provinces was declared autonomous. Even Georgian Bolsheviks resisted, especially as the proposed capital city, Tskhinvali, was then an overwhelmingly Georgian Jewish city with Georgian, Armenian and Jewish markets (only eight Ossete households were registered there in 1870).[1] Not until November 1921 were the borders of South Ossetia, including Tskhinvali, fixed.

Georgians resented the Bolsheviks' other territorial concessions. The Turks were conceded territory occupied in February 1921 – Ardahan, Artvin and Oltu, some 12,000 square kilometres; the Armenians took nearly 4,000 square kilometres of Borchalo district, and the Azeris a large part of Zakataly district. Protest was futile: Konstantine Gamsakhurdia wrote an open letter to Lenin on 7 May 1921, arguing that Georgia would accept communism, if it kept independence: he warned Lenin that Georgia could become another Ireland, that Georgian Roger Casements and Terence McSwiney would resist Soviet Russia. Silent shock gave way to demonstrations on 26 May 1922, the fourth anniversary of the declaration of Georgian independence. Despite precautions (schools were closed and trains laid on to take teachers and pupils out of Tbilisi, while the Red Army patrolled the streets and confined the Georgian army to barracks), strikes broke out on 24 May. Railway workers in Tbilisi encouraged a general strike in Gori. Church bells rang out; the republican anthem *Dideba* was played. The Cheka responded with live fire. In some areas, like Sukhumi, Russian soldiers refused to shoot. But demonstrations were dangerous: on the 1923 Independence Day, the underground Freedom Committee asked the public to stay indoors.

Moscow's next step angered even Georgian Bolsheviks: the Soviet Union would now consist of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and a new Transcaucasian Republic, in which Georgia would be one of three subordinate republics. The Transcaucasian Federation was recognized by Turkey in a treaty of 16 October 1921. A Soviet Central Committee commission listened to arguments between Sergo Orjonikidze, Stalin and Felix Dzierżyński, who insisted on federation, and Budu Mdivani who represented the majority 'nationalist deviationist' Georgian communists who opposed it. Budu Mdivani was punched in the face. Lenin, who regarded Stalin and Orjonikidze as typically coarse 'Russified aborigines', sided with Mdivani, but was too ill to impose his will. On 10 December 1922 the Transcaucasian Federal Republic Soviet (responsible for Georgia's foreign, military and economic affairs) held its first meeting in Baku.

Economic measures were more oppressive. In 1923 peasants were apportioned land according to family size and district: an average peasant family would work about 4 hectares in Kartli, or 2.5 in Imeretia: arithmetic showed that Georgia lacked 350,000 hectares of arable land. Economic collapse, harvest failure in 1920, war in 1921 and the needs of an enormous occupying army of soldiers and Chekisty caused widespread famine. Citizens' food stocks were requisitioned: Razhden Mirianashvili, a Tbilisi shopowner, was shot for concealing 79 cheeses and 12 hams; Akopian, a Tbilisi merchant, was shot for withholding 44 pairs of socks; Novosiltsev, a Russian grocer, was shot for hoarding sugar and soap.[2]

Two rebellions, one spontaneous, the other planned, were generated by Soviet invasion. In summer 1921 all Svanetia rose up under Mosestro Dadeshkeliani, expelling the Revkom, disarming Red militias, blocking tracks: a Svan delegation to Tbilisi demanding the Red Army's withdrawal and free elections was arrested. The uprising spread south to Lechkhumi. The Cheka was prepared: they brought in men like Lavrenti Beria, blooded by a year's experience in Baku. Soviet Russia was pacified, and skilled interrogators and paramilitaries were free to repress both Transcaucasia and Central Asia. The Chekisty began with dissident Mensheviks, army officers and workers. In April 1921, 3,000 social democrats held a meeting demanding free elections. In July 1921 Stalin, flanked by Chekisty, made a rare visit to Tbilisi: he was shouted down at a workers' meeting in Nadzaladevi Theatre. At a conference in August, the Mensheviks walked out when free elections were crossed off the agenda. The Cheka made mass arrests: victims were shot, without trial, at night in Vake Park in northwest Tbilisi; the Menshevik war minister was deported (and shot in 1937). Some Mensheviks, like Grigol Urutadze, agreed to spy for the Cheka. The Cheka lacked informers: they enlisted all communists to act, and recruited police cadets from Baku. Duplication hindered their work: the Transcaucasian Cheka complained that the Georgian Cheka was arresting its informers.[3] They employed criminals whom they freed from prison and who then robbed and murdered not just aristocrats and rebels, but also communist officials. They tried mercy, releasing 62 intellectuals in 1922, and deporting 78 Mensheviks in 1923; they 'turned' 260 apostates into loyal communists.

The Cheka fought the Church, arresting the new patriarch, Ambrosi, after he openly appealed to the Genoa Peace Conference of 1922. The OGPU (the renamed Cheka) closed over a thousand churches and shot many priests and monks. Ambrosi and senior bishops were tried for treason in March 1924, but revulsion at the executions of five senior clerics in Kutaisi in September 1924 forced OGPU to reprieve Ambrosi and his bishops: they were sentenced to prison. Ambrosi was released, dying shortly after Beria denounced him in 1927. The 'acting' patriarch Kristepore

obediently demanded that Ambrosi be defrocked, but by 1930 Kristepore was complaining first of harassment, then of punitive taxation. On Kristepore's death in 1931, Kalistrate, a fellow student of Stalin's at Tbilisi seminary, became the unofficial patriarch: he enjoyed freedoms denied to Russian churchmen, such as opening churches and consecrating bishops.[4] As in Russia, workers were dragooned into a Union of the Godless, which had 120,000 members by 1938, but was abolished in Georgia in 1947. Sectarians like the Molokane ('milk-drinkers' even during Lent) welcomed Soviet attacks on Orthodoxy, but the outlandish behaviour of sects like the 'Spiritual Leapers',[5] who now leaped even in winter, alarmed OGPU.

Attacks on religion, aping Stalin's and Trotsky's attack on Patriarch Tikhon and the Russian Orthodox Church, sparked revolt. In spring 1922 the Khevsur highlands erupted: a Kakhetian aristocrat, Prince Kaikhosro Choloqashvili, known as Kakutsa, took his partisans, known as the Band of Sworn Men, together with men under Mikheil Lashkarashvili, a former social democrat field commander, to join the Khevsurs. He was fought with bombs and artillery, but, with Chechnya as his refuge, held out for two years. Fifteen Khevsur rebels were executed on 19 May 1923. A revenge killing of OGPU executioners made Kakutsa and Lashkarashvili folk heroes. Kakutsa's brother was killed, his father-in-law executed, but he took the town of Manglisi, and raided Tbilisi suburbs before conceding defeat.[6] In autumn 1924, leaving his wife and children, he crossed into Turkey and escaped to France. One of Kakutsa's allies was Levan Razikashvili, a son of the poet Vazha Pshavela: Levan served the Bolsheviks, as he had the social democrats, as a chief of police in Tianeti. OGPU sentenced him to death for aiding Kakutsa: Georgia's writers protested to Orjonikidze, who responded that he 'would execute Vazha himself': on 13 February 1923 Levan was shot.

Kakutsa refused to enlist criminals, but bandit gangs were equally effective against the communists. Ivane Kratsashvili, himself a bandit's grandson, recruited outlaws who outwitted the Cheka's cavalry and negotiators throughout 1922. Kratsashvili was shot by his own men, to whom the Cheka had promised amnesty.[7] Conversely, the Bolsheviks used bandits as allies: Vasil Kasradze's Gori gang, pardoned by the Mensheviks in 1920, was in February 1921 asked by the Bolshevik Aleksandre Gegechkori to police Tskhinvali, then disputed by Ossetians and Georgians. Kasradze's men began shooting communists, as well as robbing Jews and Ossetians: it took the Chekist Sajaia three years to eliminate the Kasradze bandits.

On 10 February 1923 three Chekists were killed in Guria: the Cheka responded by killing 92 men and promising to shoot all prisoners if banditry continued. Orjonikidze declared that he would kill one and a half million Georgians for the sake of the USSR, but partisan warfare continued until 1927. On 27 March 1924 Beria reported that the countryside was 'literally flooded with a network of criminal and political bands,

Kaikhosro (Kakutsa) Choloqashvili (1888–1930), anti-communist rebel.

dominated by the Mensheviks':[8] he sent 168 to Moscow for interrogation, confiscated four printing presses, arrested two leading Mensheviks, Noe Khomeriki and Seit Devdariani, captured or killed nearly 700 'bandits', but the situation remained critical.

Remnants of the social democrats and other parties, the Georgian army and National Guard organized resistance: in April 1921 they held 'Interparty Committees' and formed an all-party Independence Committee (Damkom), known within and outside Georgia as the Parity Committee. In Georgia, the effective organizations were the Military Centre and Kakutsa's Band of Sworn Men. Two generals, Prince Kote Apkhazi and Varden Tsulukidze, directed tactics: they were caught and shot, with fourteen others, on 19 May 1923. Giorgi Mazniashvili, nominally a Red Army com-

mander, was suspected of assisting the rebels. Beria's OGPU then began 'filtering' former Mensheviks, confiscating their archives and printing presses. By the end of 1923 the OGPU had 'taken out' nearly 700 'bandits'.

The Military Centre and the social democrat government in Parisian exile, in particular the hardliner Noe Ramishvili, believed, against the evidence, that a well-planned and well-funded general uprising would win support in Europe and make the Soviets let go of Georgia. By selling some of its 69 crates of art treasures, with help from the French authorities, the Menshevik government bought an estate at Leuville-sur-Orge south of Paris and paid its ministers. While the USSR was *de jure* unrecognized, Zhordania's government and legation enjoyed legitimate status. They easily maintained contact with the homeland. Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, residents and exiles, were often old schoolfriends, even kinsfolk. Moreover, the Kars treaty of 10 October 1921 left the mountainous and depopulated frontier zone with Turkey permeable until 1937: despite Cheka protests, it stipulated that those living with 10 miles of the frontier could cross for up to 21 days, while those who lived within 2 miles could stay for up to a year.[9] Rebels escaped and émigré agents infiltrated at will. Muslim Georgians were freely granted exit visas to Turkey, and Turkish Georgians entry visas to Georgia. Zhordania and Ramishvili optimistically fomented rebellion; Lavrenti Beria, proving himself a star pupil of Moscow's head of OGPU Viacheslav Menzhinsky in subverting émigré plots, was equally sanguine about penetrating and disorientating Mensheviks. By the end of 1924 Beria and his colleagues were so highly valued that the Transcaucasian OGPU was banned from meddling with their work.

Social democrats in Georgia warned Zhordania that OGPU knew everything in advance; former ministers, like Noe Khomeriki, were induced to write from prison that the struggle was doomed. Nevertheless, a rebellion was planned for 1924, at first February, and eventually August. General Valiko Jugheli, trained at Saint-Cyr, was smuggled across the Turkish border in May 1924 to take command, but in August was intercepted, tortured into writing a circular cancelling the uprising and, after a failed suicide attempt, allegedly burned alive by OGPU.[10] A general strike was planned for 28 May: Mamia Orakhelashvili, communist party chairman, telegraphed to Stalin, and former Mensheviks were sent to Moscow or kept as hostages to be shot if need be. On 12 July there were mass arrests all over Georgia.

Nevertheless the Damkom went ahead at 4 a.m. on 28 August 1924 in the mining town of Chiatura, where 112 socialist federalist fighters with one machine gun (which jammed) took the railway station and bridges, arresting or killing communist officials. Over a thousand rebels, from peasants to schoolteachers, then attacked villages around Kutaisi. Imeretian Bolsheviks retreated to the village of Sviri before rallying with

army cadets and GPU troops under the ruthless Tite Lortkipanidze. Poorly armed, uncoordinated, the rebels failed to take any major city. In Kakhetia a force led by priests tried to capture Vaziani army base and its 120 cannon. Tbilisi was too well policed, and its populace disbelieved the Mensheviks' claims of a Transcaucasian rebellion or promises of a supportive British invasion. Within three days the rebellion was put down; aircraft dropped leaflets promising 'forgiveness' for surrender. Menshevik hostages were shot somewhere between Moscow and Rostov. Imeretian rebels were packed into six railway carriages, which stopped outside Zestaponi, where graves were dug: 96 men were shot with Mauser pistols, others machine-gunned; the bodies were covered with quicklime. Five hundred Mingrelian rebels were shot in Senaki.[11] The Parity Committee leaders were discovered in Shio-Mghvime monastery and told they would be shot on the spot if they did not abort the rebellion. Their chairman, Prince Kote Andronikashvili, agreed: they were taken to see Beria and ordered a ceasefire. Some of these Damkom members were spared; Kote Andronikashvili was even allowed a final word, claiming a moral victory for the uprising.

At least 980 men, the cream of Georgia's intelligentsia and nobility (95 per cent were from the gentry), were shot on or around 1 September 1924,[12] sentenced by a troika of party officials and Chekists, and executed by Tatars or Azeris. (Many victims were innocent friends or relatives of rebels.) Hundreds of others, including the writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, who had returned from internment and diplomatic service in Germany, were sent to Arctic prison camps. Among the few conspirators spared, after frantic lobbying, was the prose writer Mikeil Javakhishvili. Even Stalin deplored the retribution: on 2 September he told the Transcaucasian Party to stop all executions immediately.[13] Orjonikidze was unapologetic when defending himself in the Soviet Central Committee: 'We conducted mass shootings: perhaps we overdid it slightly, but that can't be helped now.'

The crushing of the rebellion demoralized Zhordania, Ramishvili and Gegechkori as much as their exile three years previously. They were blamed for fomenting a bloodbath; émigré solidarity crumbled. The Georgian exile community numbered just 2,000, half living in France, others in Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland, but their influence was disproportionately high. After the 1924 rebellion, Soviet Georgians made overtures and inroads. In December 1924 Budu Mdivani and Stalin's brother-in-law Aliosha Svanidze came to Paris on a trade mission; they met Grigol Veshapeli, a founder of Damkom, and funded a conciliatory journal, *New Georgia*, which Veshapeli edited in Paris. Veshapeli was ostracized by other Mensheviks, his typesetter scared off; he himself was 'like a hunted animal'. In 1925 the Soviet minister of culture, Lunacharsky, staged an exhibition of Georgian art in Paris and persuaded émigrés to

collaborate. The trap was sprung on 9 June 1926: Grigol Veshapeli was shot dead in a taxi by a social democrat, Avtandil Merabishvili, who confessed to working for the OGPU, but said he was an anti-Soviet militant – a member of the Georgian 'White George' fascists, he had previously been arrested for attacking Veshapeli and his friends in the Café Voltaire. Merabishvili was defended by communist lawyers and acquitted by a French court which looked benignly on political murders. Beria had killed an émigré and made the killing seem an émigré feud.[14]

Similar provocations were traceable to the OGPU agent Pirumov in Berlin and Paris. In Prague in 1924 a Dzindzibadze opened fire on a Georgian student meeting, but escaped arrest on the grounds of 'personal provocation': rumours spread that Noe Ramishvili planned the attempted massacre. (Later it transpired that Dzindzibadze was offered repatriation to Georgia if he declared he was a Menshevik assassin.) Many Georgians worked at the Peugeot car factory at Audincourt, near the Swiss border, where trade union socialists controlled hiring and firing. In September 1926 Kakutsa's nationalists, pro-Soviet workers and Mensheviks brawled: of seventeen injured, two died, including Shalva Kartsivadze, an associate of Noe Ramishvili. Mensheviks were culled. In 1926 the veteran Karlo Chkheidze was found dead with his throat cut: suicide was recorded. A Bolshevik hitman, Alikhanahvili, an alleged killer of the tsarist general Alikhanov, visited France, and returned to Georgia to reproach the OGPU for not carrying out further assassinations. The Mensheviks took countermeasures: they imprisoned Davit Chkheidze, a 1924 rebel, in a psychiatric hospital when he announced his reconciliation with the Soviets. Chkheidze was freed thanks to the flamboyant lawyer Henri Torrès. (Torrès, then a communist, won fame in 1927 by securing the acquittal of the 'lone avenger' Sholom Schwartzbard who murdered the Ukrainian nationalist Simon Petliura.)

The Mensheviks were backed by Polish intelligence: Poland was determined to subvert Bolshevism wherever it could. Noe Ramishvili, and later Evgeni Gegechkori, travelled to Warsaw; the Poles financed covert visits to Georgia to see if underground resistance was active. Covert visits often ended with Cheka execution; Beria's men were alarmed by the backing given the Mensheviks by Polish, Turkish and French intelligence services, not to mention companies hoping for access to Baku oilfields. Germans also showed interest: many officers had pleasant memories of Georgia in 1918, and Germany had experts on Georgia, as well as Georgian scholars working in universities. In 1925 Spiridon Kedia, a national democrat member of Damkom, met Hitler, and tried to oust Noe Ramishvili and form a new émigré government.

Beria had one success: General Mazniashvili, sentenced to death and then deported after the rebellion, spied for him: Mazniashvili's letter to

L. P. Beria, first secretary of the Communist Party of Transcaucasia and then of Georgia, (1931–8).

Beria of October 1925 described the exiles' dismay at the rebellion's failure.[15] (Mazniashvili returned to Georgia in 1926: he lived in his home village until he was shot in the 1937 Great Terror.) Beria now targeted Kakutsa, whose wife and children he held hostage. Kakutsa had, like Beria, despised the Mensheviks: he favoured the proto-fascist 'White George' movement. Kakutsa was offered $2,000 to make a pro-Soviet recantation, but he dithered. His ally Spiridon Kedia also demurred, despite the efforts of Beria's agent Grigol Gegelia. Beria took revenge by foisting forged gold coins on Kakutsa and denouncing him to the French police; when this charge failed, Kakutsa was framed for stealing French War Ministry funds.[16] Rumours spread that Kakutsa planned to assassinate Zhordania and Ramishvili.

Kakutsa's death from TB in 1930 foiled Beria's plans. The Soviets were now blaming Mensheviks for sabotaging the collectivization of the peasantry. Beria struck again. On 7 December 1930 Noe Ramishvili, walking to a metro station, was shot dead. His companion, though wounded, held on to the murderer until the police arrived. The killer, Parmen Chanuqvadze, claimed his motives were personal: he had lost his job at

Peugeot because of Ramishvili. Then he blamed Ramishvili for the bloody aftermath of the 1924 rebellion. Chanuqvadze's political twist came too late for his defence (again by Henri Torrès) to win acquittal.[17] He was sentenced to ten years in prison, but freed after a few months as insane. (Chanuqvadze was probably an OGPU agent: Ramishvili had long ago signed his own death warrant, by ordering Beria's arrest in 1919 and publicly humiliating Stalin, even, it is said, punching him to the ground. Ramishvili's murder recalls Petliura's murder by Schwartzbard.)

Spiridon Kedia and other right-wing Georgians, unwittingly controlled by Beria's agent, Gegelia, admitted 'using' Chanuqvadze. Ramishvili's death crippled the Mensheviks: Evgeni Gegechkori lost interest in politics; the émigré struggle passed to the right wing, supported by German fascists and anti-Soviet Poland.

The 1924 events caused famine and anarchy: the OGPU reported citizens of Akhalkalaki eating grass, walking naked, sleeping on earth floors.[18] The orphanages were filled, and in 1926 the Commissariat for Education dispersed orphans among peasant families 'to prepare them for agricultural labour'.[19] The year 1925 was gentler: nearly a thousand prisoners were released, the peasants' taxes were lighter, banditry decreased. Despite a partial reversion to a market economy (the New Economic Plan) and the distribution of land to the peasantry, Georgia could not feed its population: OGPU reported starvation in December 1927 around Tbilisi and Zugdidi; train crews were too hungry to work.[20] In spring 1928 bread riots broke out in Tbilisi. The peasantry also resented religious oppression: Christians trekked over a hundred miles for baptism or burial; in 1929 Ajarian Muslims rebelled over the unveiling of women and the closure of madrasehs.

The party's one success was reconciling communist officials with intellectuals: party secretaries like Beso Lominadze had attended school with symbolist poets like Titsian Tabidze and Paolo Iashvili. Soon Tbilisi's creative artists and Bolsheviks were partying together and marrying one another. Poets such as Nikolo Mitsishvili, who returned from France in 1925 as Beria's agent, led literary circles. In 1927 Konstantine Gamsakhurdia returned from Arctic imprisonment, translated Dante's *Inferno* and horrified more principled intellectuals by becoming an intimate of Beria's.

Power in Georgia lay, theoretically, with Mamia Orakhelashvili of the Transcaucasian Party, answering through a Georgian chain of command to Sergo Orjonikidze and Stalin in Moscow. The Transcaucasian OGPU was at first controlled by Solomon Mogilevsky, helped by Stalin's bloodthirsty friend, Georgi Atarbekov, but their deputy Lavrenti Beria (born in 1899) was the brains and engine of the service. In 1923 he was awarded an inscribed Brauning pistol by the chiefs of OGPU. In 1925 Mogilevsky and Atarbekov were killed in a plane crash for which sabotage

by Beria is the only plausible explanation proposed. (Beria was blamed for other deaths, notably the suicide in 1928 of his wife's uncle, the old Bolshevik Aleksandre Gegechkori.) Beria then worked under Stanislav Redens, Stalin's brother-in-law. Redens knew no Georgian and drank heavily; Beria found it easy to discredit and disgrace him, while using him to gain access to Stalin. Beria appointed Georgians and Mingrelians to replace the Poles, Azeris and Latvians in the Transcaucasian secret police.

Beria followed OGPU policies, repressing Mensheviks, Orthodox believers and free artistic expression. But, where he could do so with impunity, he adapted Soviet policies to Georgian conditions. Above all, he wanted to impress Stalin and silence enemies who alleged that he was an agent of Azeri nationalists in 1919. Beria and other Georgian communists had to endure a virtually independent Abkhazia, whose leader Nestor Lakoba was then one of the few whom Stalin trusted and liked. Stalin used Abkhazia for recreation, an island of tranquillity to isolate enemies and reward friends: he exempted it from the class and economic wars ravaging most of the USSR.

Beria's rise was speeded by the incompetence of the party leaders – Petre Aghniashvili, Mamia and his wife Maria Orakhelashvili, Mikheil Kakhiani. They tried both free trade in land and consolidating farms into cooperatives; they signed contracts with the American tycoon Averell Harriman to rebuild Poti and export manganese. But even by 1927 Georgian agriculture and industry produced less than in 1913. Few new roads, railways or factories were built: only new hydroelectric stations improved citizens' lives. Embezzlement, extortion and nepotism went unpunished. Orakhelashvili's government lost control of Ajaria, which rebelled in 1929, and of Abkhazia, where Lakoba turned a blind eye to numerous murders. (In any case, Stalin's affection made Lakoba irremovable.)

Culture prospered in laissez-faire chaos: Georgian historians, linguists, prose and verse writers, painters, theatre and film producers, composers showed genius. A Russian–Georgian network, through exhibitions, translations, writers' delegations, drama festivals, made Georgian culture well known throughout the USSR, even in Europe. Tertiary education also flourished: Tbilisi university produced a generation of historians, antiquarians, physicists, biologists who made the late 1920s and early 1930s seem a renaissance. Doctrinaire Marxism hindered scholarship and science less in Tbilisi than in Moscow.

The struggle initiated by Stalin's circle after Lenin's death in 1924 first to isolate Trotsky, then to disempower the 'leftist' Zinoviev and Kamenev, was faintly echoed in Tbilisi. Critics of Stalin and Orjonikidze were expelled from (but often readmitted to) the party, but Georgia had few genuine Trotskyists. There was, however, a generational change: old Bolsheviks like Makharadze and Lominadze either took a back seat or worked else-

where in the USSR, while a new generation who had never held a gun or argued a Marxist tenet, rose through the ranks of the party or OGPU.

These new activists were sorely tested by Stalin's 'great breakthrough' of 1929, when the peasantry was enslaved in order to finance an industrialized, militarily strong USSR. Divided into three groups – the poor, to be kept to work the land; the rich 'kulaks' to be dispossessed, deported, or culled; the 'middle' peasants, merely to be dispossessed – Russia's peasantry began a Calvary that starved to death about ten million over four years and provided a labour pool for industry. Georgia produced little grain, and was spared the worst: only 1–2 per cent of its peasantry were labelled as kulaks. (Abkhazia, where Lakoba insisted society was egalitarian, escaped.) Even so, the first 'giddy' wave of collectivization left peasants slaughtering, rather than surrendering their livestock, and in Stalin's retraction of summer 1930, the peasants deserted the collective farms. OGPU supervised this new serfdom: at the end of 1930 they reported in Georgia a catastrophic loss of 41,000 cattle, 36,000 sheep and 60,000 pigs.[21] Promised tractors and implements never materialized; collectivized peasants downed tools. Collective farm HQs were set on fire, activists were beaten up, and OGPU had to release detainees and remove party members from the scene. Dispossessed kulaks took to banditry. Redens and Beria requested 1,000 armed men, 30 machine guns, 500 hand-grenades and 300,000 bullets to repress peasants.[22] A modest target of 500 kulaks and 500 Menshevik saboteurs to be imprisoned was set; only 300 kulak families were actually deported in 1933 to Siberia. By 1932 just a quarter of Georgia's peasant households were collectivized: even by 1937 the number barely reached 75 per cent.

The fiasco was blamed on the party leadership: the Orakhelashvilis lost their jobs at the end of 1929, and a Russian was appointed party secretary for Transcaucasia; Georgian Bolsheviks were moved to the Ukraine, Central Asia or Moscow, clearing Beria's path to power. Beso Lominadze, who dared to criticize Stalin, was marked for destruction but temporarily sheltered in the Urals by Orjonikidze. By August 1931 Beria had his seat in the collegium of OGPU. Stalin, Orjonikidze and Lakoba discussed handing Transcaucasia over to the 32-year-old upstart. Lakoba kept notes:

> STALIN: Will Beria do for Transcaucasia?
> LAKOBA: The only person who works properly is Beria. Perhaps we are biased towards him.
> ORJONIKIDZE: Beria's a fine chap, he works . . .
> STALIN : Well, are you pushing Mamia out?
> LAKOBA: Mamia doesn't organize anybody or anything, he doesn't call anybody to order, he doesn't get a hold on anything . . .

Beria's father was a Mingrelian peasant; his mother was by birth a Jaqeli, a descendant of the ruling family of Samtskhe province. Like Stalin, Beria was a determined, highly intelligent pupil, supported by an ambitious mother, and became psychopathically vindictive. Unlike Stalin, he cared for his family, including his deaf-mute sister Ana. The stories of Beria's early life are legend – a schoolteacher supposedly predicted he would be 'bandit or gendarme'. Everything points to extraordinary managerial talent, ruthlessness and ungovernable, sadistic sensuality. Beria's initial training was in hydraulic engineering: at one point he even applied to be relieved of secret police duties and sent to Belgium to study engineering. In the 1930s he showed talent for industrial schemes, directing the engineer Volodia Jikia in a project to drain the Rioni marshes. Similar projects expanded citrus groves, tea plantations and even the production of exotic fruits, like feijoa. The bacteriologist Gogi Eliava reduced epidemics, while Beria commissioned road-building and mining projects. Under Beria scholars like Akaki Shanidze and Arnold Chikobava worked on Caucasian languages and folklore, while members of the Union of Writers prospered, especially after its first congress in Moscow in 1934, often supplementing their income and prestige with official and party posts. Even Beria had trouble, however, suppressing rackets: as late as 1934 the militia were rustling cattle, while the commissar for justice in Ajaria was appropriating confiscated goods and freeing criminals.

Beria had, however, delicate quandaries: Georgians had always resisted Russian proposals to allow the Mingrelian language to be taught in schools and used in the media. Soviet policies elsewhere in the Caucasus created several 'newly literary' languages. Mingrelians, some of whom spoke little Georgian, pressed for parity. In the 1920s Mingrelian separatism had been either tacitly encouraged or punished as 'separatist nationalism'. In 1929 and at the end of 1931, however, the Transcaucasian Central Committee received arguments for and against permitting the Mingrelian-language newspaper *Qazakhishi*. In the 1930s nationalism was becoming a political crime; Beria, despite his Mingrelian father, suppressed Mingrelian, lest the language be a pretext for autonomy.[23] An edition of Stalin's and Lenin's works in Mingrelian was stopped, other books were banned, and, despite appeals to Stalin, Mingrelian faded from the radio (it was last used officially in a 1937 show trial).

Whenever Stalin came to the Caucasus (usually to Abkhazia, to Tbilisi in 1932 for the last time) Beria displayed his loyalty extravagantly, staging an attack on Stalin's launch, interposing his own body between the leader and the assailants (this 'terrorist' act of 23 September 1933 was later blamed on Lakoba),[24] waving an axe at Stalin's imaginary enemies, dandling Stalin's daughter Svetlana on his knees, insinuating his agents into Stalin's household. (Stalin occasionally asked Beria for favours, for example,

in 1933 to release his old seminary teacher Makhatadze 'who is no danger to Soviet power'.) In 1934 Beria was arrayed in glory: OGPU expanded into a giant People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD); Beria, although also party secretary, loved to intimidate the intelligentsia and the party by donning a resplendent NKVD uniform when he addressed them in the opera house or Party offices.

In 1936 this vainglory abruptly changed into tyranny worse than anything Georgia had ever experienced. Stalin dismissed and then imprisoned his NKVD chief, Genrikh Yagoda, for dilatoriness in eliminating political opposition, and appointed the 'bloody dwarf' Nikolai Ezhov – the first time that an appointee of Stalin's ran the security services. Apparently, Nestor Lakoba had refused the post. Spurned, Stalin acted to destroy Lakoba. Under the 'democratic' Soviet constitution of 1936, the Transcaucasian Soviet Republic was dissolved: Georgia (like Armenia and Azerbaijan) became a full constituent republic of the USSR. Beria showed his power by inviting the first secretary of Armenia, Khanjian, to his office in July 1936 and shooting him dead. The body was wrapped in a carpet, and Khanjian's suicide was announced. Lakoba now answered to Beria, who invited him to dinner in Tbilisi in November: poisoned, Lakoba was seized with convulsions in the opera house, in full sight of Tbilisi's elite. Beria and his wife attended the funeral in Sukhumi, but over the next few years Lakoba's family and inner circle, posthumously branded Turkish spies, were exterminated. Abkhazia then underwent a merciless purge, and more Mingrelians and Georgians came to govern a tribe content to 'live off their mandarin trees'.

For a decade, Beria had undermined Lakoba, seeking to succeed him as Stalin's acolyte. In 1925 Beria forced Mikhail Lakoba, Nestor's half-brother, out of the security services and accused him of robberies and murders dating back to 1919, of torturing the relatives of a girl who rebuffed him, of protecting White Guards. The Abkhaz party elite were (rightly) accused of marrying into the aristocracy.[25] Stalin was thus induced to reprimand Lakoba for not creating at least a facade of socialism in Abkhazia, but Beria's 41 charges against the Lakobas had been, until 1936, unavailing.

Beria disposed of every party member who might compromise him: the minister of education, Eduard Bedia, who ghost-wrote Beria's adulatory book on Stalin's leadership of the Transcaucasian Bolsheviks, for example; anyone who thought independently, or whom he disliked or envied. A purge expelled 6,572 communists: a third of the party. Many of those were arrested. By the end of 1936 Beria (with Stalin's sanction) had removed prominent Bolsheviks like Budu Mdivani and Malakia Toroshelidze, rector of the university (whom Stalin had warmly embraced in 1932): 'mixed up in counter-revolutionary Trotskyist groups', they were

soon shot. Most NKVD and party leaders, from the Orakhelashvilis (British spies, allegedly) downwards, were executed as spies, Trotskyists, etc. by mid-1938. (Even Beria's patron, Orjonikidze, whom Stalin forced to commit suicide in February 1937, was called a saboteur, whom Beria had stopped 'decapitating Georgia'.) Beria killed the husbands and would-be lovers of women who attracted him, thus destroying Georgia's most valuable scientists, including Jikia and Eliava. The theatre director Sandro Akhmeteli, whose Stanislavskian methods taught Beria how to make prisoners confess convincingly to the most ludicrous crimes (assassinating Beria and Stalin, giving Ajaria to the Turks, poisoning reservoirs with anthrax), was destroyed. Beria personally blinded and deafened Georgia's leading conductor, Evgeni Mikeladze, before killing him (Mikeladze's wife Ketevan survived the Gulag: the heroine of Abuladze's film *Repentance* is based on her).

Beria even turned on the Church he had tolerated: an elderly priest Pavle Dashniani was shot on 27 November 1937 for christening 120 children, although he had a mandate from the bishop of Kutaisi and Gelati.[26] In June 1937 Beria slaughtered writers whom he had patronized. The leading Blue Horn (a neo-Symbolist group) poet, novelist and dramatist, Grigol Robakidze, had defected to Nazi Germany, which provided a pretext for killing a quarter of the Union of Writers. After arresting twelve writers in June 1937, Beria summoned others to a meeting, warning them: 'Some of you have undeclared links with enemies of the people.' Beria made them hold long all-night sittings to denounce each other for ideological crimes, while the NKVD waited in the foyer to remove those incriminated. Paolo Iashvili committed suicide; the union declared his act loathsome; Mikeil Javakhishvili lamented Iashvili's death, and was led away to torture and execution.[27] Each prisoner was tortured or blackmailed into naming dozens of accomplices. The unfortunate 'Trotskyist' Lidia Gasviani, daughter of a leading state publisher, implicated all her lovers and political contacts and supplied Beria with statements dooming most of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party and of the membership of the Union of Writers, A few, ideologically the least likely, were exempted from these torments: the poets Galaktion Tabidze and Ioseb Grishashvili, and the novelist Konstantine Gamsakhurdia (who had portrayed Beria as a rapist and parricide in his novel *Abducting the Moon*): Beria knew that Stalin read all three. Beria allowed Gamsakhurdia impunity at meetings, to say that 'sending intellectuals to camps was imitating Hitler', or that just 'because Russians were pruning their conifers didn't mean that Georgians had to prune their walnuts'. Politically vulnerable men, like the folklorist Tedo Sakhokia, a member of the Menshevik government, were allowed to live in peace (Sakhokia's granddaughter reports that after 1937 he never slept at night).

At the end of July 1937 Ezhov proposed a bloodbath first for party members, including Chekists, and then for the urban and professional population. Ezhov gave Soviet security services *limity* (target numbers) for arrests and executions. Over the next four months, one per cent of the population (largely males between 18 and 45) was to be arrested and, on average, after confessions were extracted, 20 per cent of them were to be shot and 80 per cent sent to the Gulag. For Georgia the target was 5,000, but of these 40 per cent were to be shot. All those in Beria's position understood, after seeing Yagoda's fate, that over-enthusiasm was safer than pedantic adherence: they sought permission to exceed the target, sometimes by a factor of five. Ordinary workers fell victim: two beekeepers were shot, one for leaving his bees too much honey, one too little.[28] Executions were intensive – Beria's assistant Nadaraia boasted of dispatching 500 men in one night, while Zakhar Shashurkin thought nothing of killing a batch of 300 prisoners, and torture was so terrible that over half the communist party and *komsomol* (Communist youth movement) had denounced other members as enemies of the people. How many were shot has yet to be calculated: Beria's deputy, Akvsenti Rapava, signed 2,465 death sentences, mostly in 1937 just before he was sent to rule Abkhazia. Beria wrote to Stalin in 1937 that the prisons were bursting (he had arrested over 12,000 in a few months of 1937) and the party depleted (4,300 had been expelled).[29] He was not complaining for humanitarian reasons: detainees could no longer be isolated and were 'conspiring' with each other, even committing suicide: Beria wanted special collegia to expedite more executions. (In 1957 the Seventh Plenum of the Georgian party was informed that in total Beria had arrested 50,000 and shot 20,000 during the Great Terror.) Concentrating on political 'crime', the authorities treated ordinary criminals casually: in February 1937, 198 bandits were released and pushed across the Turkish border. In the frenzy of arrests, Beria forgot the economy: the year 1937 was a hungry one after the maize crop failed, and a shortage of tyres stopped the transport of produce. Drunken workers and soldiers roamed the city streets unhindered.

Some 18,000 party members were recruited to replace those shot: by 1939 there were more communists than in 1935; now, however, in both party and NKVD, white-collar workers and university graduates, owing everything to Stalinism, replaced workers and peasants (who often had pre-revolutionary memories and loyalties) as the dominant element. Despite the horrors of collectivization and the Great Terror (in which Georgia lost some 40,000, predominantly men aged between 30 and 50), the population, too, increased between 1926 and 1937 from 2,670,000 to 3,300,000, a testimony to the Georgian peasant's fecundity, once war and famine receded.

In autumn 1938 Stalin conceded that USSR's killing frenzy had gone too far. Beria was summoned to Moscow, first to shadow, then to oust and

execute Ezhov. Terror was sharply reduced, for Ezhov could not condemn anyone without Beria's countersignature, but Beria at first carried on arresting, earning the permanent hatred of what was left of the Red Army by torturing Marshal Bliukher to death, torturing and killing many Soviet diplomats, but again populating the NKVD with graduates as well as thugs. Stalin himself, handing others the reins of power, took renewed interest in all things Georgian. He had rid Moscow of his Georgian subordinates – Abel Enukidze, Sergo Orjonikidze, his own brother-in-law Aliosha Svanidze. With Beria's arrival, Stalin looked for other Georgians, not just Chekists, but intellectuals: Professor Petre Sharia, who translated Stalin's works from Russian into Georgian and vice versa; Shalva Nutsubidze, whom Stalin had freed when he saw the latter's translation of Rustaveli. Stalin's marginalia in his library books show that from 1939 to 1941 he avidly read Georgian history, fiction and linguistics. Stalin himself edited Nutsubidze's Russian version of Rustaveli in 1941, replacing two lines with his own 'superior' version. Nutsubidze was housed in a slum by a prison and threatened with arrest if he did not finish his translation within a year. His occasional verse reflects the situation of every Georgian creative intellectual:

> Prison one side, madhouse the other,
> So that's how the world runs for me,
> I stand bravely between the two,
> And laugh out loud like Mephistopheles.[30]

Stalin also freed the old Bolshevik Sergo Kavtaradze, a diplomat with literary interests, for whose life his eleven-year-old daughter had pleaded.

Beria brought to Moscow a dozen Tbilisi Chekists. In 1939 Georgia was thus in the same paradoxical situation as 250 years before, when most of Iran's provinces had Georgian governors and its army was led by Georgian kings and princes. With Beria in Moscow, his acolytes Janjghava (renamed Tsanava for simplicity) in Belarus, Gvishiani in Vladivostok, Sajaia in Tashkent, Rapava in Georgia, once again Georgians (or Mingrelians) ran the empire that held Georgia in thrall. By 1939 Georgia enjoyed a rationalization of tyranny. Beria had left Akvsenti Rapava in charge of Georgia's NKVD, but Stalin had insisted on handing chairmanship of the Georgian party to Kandid Charkviani, a humane engineer, journalist and man of letters, hitherto secretary of the Writers' Union. Possibly, Kandid Charkviani was in Stalin's eyes a relative of the priest Kristopore Charkviani who taught the young Ioseb Russian and got him into school; certainly, Charkviani's appointment was meant to limit Beria's control of Georgia.

Charkviani refrained from bloody initiatives, but diligently obeyed Moscow's orders. The notorious 'steam' and 'snow' cells of Metekhi prison, which boiled or froze prisoners to death, were dismantled; fabricated charges

Kandid Charkviani (1906–94), head of the Georgian Communist Party from 1938 to 1951, with his wife Tamar.

and executions were reduced, even though Akvsenti Rapava's minions still battered detainees. Charkviani lightened the censorship, developed Georgia's industry, including the new town Rustavi's metallurgy and fertilizer plants, and gave the peasantry inducements to supply the markets. In 1939 Tbilisi seemed strangely liberal: a direct descendant of Giorgi XII, Petre Bagrationi not only walked the city freely, but was also a popular songwriter. Before war broke out in June 1941, terror abated and the economy grew. With the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact, Moscow's change of alliance in 1939, however, made the security services focus on multifarious enemies – Britain, France, Turkey, even the supposed ally Germany – who might want to grab the Caucasus and Baku's oil. Beria's interest in Georgia was now that of a counter-intelligence officer: unfortunately, counter-intelligence was crippled (its best operatives were recalled between 1937 and 1939 and murdered), and Akvsenti Rapava (director of spas in Abkhazia before his promotion) and his men were clumsy amateurs.

Mensheviks in Paris lost importance after Ramishvili's assassination. Kakutsa died of an old lung injury in 1930; Evgeni Gegechkori, the former foreign minister, was apathetic: his wife opened a fashion shop, financed by the Soviet secret services. In 1933, after concluding a pact with the USSR, the French no longer recognized the Georgian legation, which was now called the Office for Georgian Refugees. The French government sequestered the remaining 39 crates of Georgian treasures; the Georgians were now merely 'curators', and they had to defend their hoard from Countess Obolenski née Dadiani, who claimed her treasures from Zugdidi palace.

New figures, oriented to Turkey, Poland and Germany, directed the émigrés. A nephew of Noe Ramishvili, Shaliko Berishvili, crossed into Georgia from Turkey in 1930, met remnants of a Menshevik underground, and escaped back to France. The Fourth Section of Polish Intelligence, 'The Prometheus Project', coordinated anti-Soviet work with enterprising right-wing Georgians. An associate of Berishvili, Menagharashvili, travelled to Iran on a Polish passport to organize covert border crossings. In Berlin, Mikheil Tsereteli, who collaborated with the Germans in 1918, headed

the fascist 'White George' society, which created a Georgian National Organization. Other Georgians, such as Mikheil Qauchkhishvili, a Siemens engineer, were influential in Germany. There were conmen who tapped the funds of French and German intelligence, but they were outnumbered by influential Georgian officers. General Kvinitadze, the hero of 1921, was joined in Berlin by General Shalva Maghlakelidze, once governor-general of Tbilisi. (Maghlakelidze would follow the Nazis into Poland and organize anti-Soviet Ukrainians in Kraków, before moving to Italy and the Vatican.)

After 1937 the French government turned hostile to the USSR and more sympathetic to émigrés from the Russian empire: men like Shaliko Berishvili now counted on support from France, Germany, Poland and Turkey. Stalin's personal envoy, Davit Kandelaki, was in Germany, negotiating with Hitler's finance minister Dr Schacht, damping down Hitler's anti-Bolshevist rhetoric. Beria's agents infiltrated, even recruited émigré Georgians, although these men proved unreliable.

In 1940 Shaliko Berishvili crossed again into Georgia, getting as far as Abastumani observatory.[31] He had learnt that his supporters, France and Turkey, had agreed that, in case of war, Turkey should be ceded a large amount of Georgian territory, giving the French bases from which to bomb Soviet cities. Berishvili posted an anonymous letter to Beria, informing him that he had been asked to reconnoitre Tbilisi and Baku on behalf of French and Turkish bombers. Berishvili received no response, but other émigré Georgian spies suddenly found prison conditions eased. In August 1940 Berishvili returned with two companions, hiding in forests around Batumi. A second letter to Beria demanded a meeting; after two weeks, communicating through a Kobuleti newspaper, Berishvili met a NKVD officer, was taken to see Rapava, and then to Moscow. Here, Berishvili became 'Agent Homer', agreeing to settle in Istanbul and report to the NKVD on everyone else he worked for, and to search for the 45 tonnes of Romanov treasure supposedly buried in Istanbul by General Vrangel. (Berishvili was given $5,000 to buy land so as to tunnel to the reputed burial site, under a building erected over a derelict Russian church: even the NKVD lost faith in the story when they next saw Berishvili in 1942.) Berishvili had his own agenda: he blamed Mensheviks, rather than the Soviets, for murdering his uncle Noe Ramishvili, and wanted the downfall of social democrats. In Istanbul Berishvili recruited Georgians for both German and Soviet intelligence. Berishvili had siblings and parents alive in Georgia, whom Rapava could imprison or kill if he failed to keep his side of the bargain.

The Poles and French, as well as fellow émigrés, were alarmed by Berishvili's contacts with a Soviet admiral in Istanbul. But his contacts proved useful. The Japanese military attaché in Istanbul through Berishvili assured Beria that the Japanese would not attack the USSR in 1941. Berishvili

stopped all illegal crossings, except his own, into Georgia from Turkey, and he deterred German agents – who considered him the only professional Georgian spy – from fomenting rebellion in Georgia, while giving Germans and émigré Georgians visiting Istanbul a rosy picture of Germany's political and economic prospects in the Caucasus. In October 1942 the Germans and Turks sanctioned Berishvili's last covert journey to Moscow (where he was supposed to plan Stalin's assassination). Berishvili had now outlived his usefulness to Beria: he was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He was totally disillusioned, in any case: one of his brothers was shot by the NKVD, another taken prisoner by the Nazis in the Crimea. In prison Berishvili was a stool pigeon, reporting on captured foreigners; his sister was arrested and tortured. After the war, de Gaulle and the French Red Cross secured Berishvili's release and tried to repatriate him, as a French citizen, to France, but he professed to be a convinced communist and spent his last years in Tbilisi.

Infiltrators and double agents were unimportant once the Germans attacked the USSR on 22 June 1941. While Georgian territory was unscathed – the Germans dropped just a few dozen bombs on Sukhumi, Poti, Tbilisi – Georgia was not. In summer 1941 Georgia's 19,186 Germans were deported to Kazakhstan, albeit relatively humanely, for they could take a tonne of possessions per family. (They had long ago lost their privileged position. Contacts with the German consul in Tbilisi, particularly the orientalist Wesendonck, led to arrests for spying in the mid-1930s.) In the first few months of the war, 100,000 Georgians were sent to the front: almost all were killed or imprisoned in German POW camps where life expectancy was short. When the Germans took the Crimea, especially during the battles for the Kerch peninsula between December 1941 and May 1942, Georgian losses, shot or drowned, were monstrous, thanks to the might of the German army, Stalin's utter disregard for human life, and the blunders of Lev Mekhlis, the Red Army's loathed political commissar. Some 550,000, most Georgian males aged 18–45, were drafted into the Red Army; 300,000 did not return – a demographic catastrophe which crippled Georgia for the rest of the century. (In 1940 the population was about 3.6 million; in 1945 about 3.4. At the pre-war birth rate, the population ought to have grown by half a million: wartime losses, including higher infant and morbid mortality, were about 700,000, or 20 per cent of the population.)

Hitler disliked 'easterners' fighting in the German army, but manpower losses on the Russian front left him no alternative. Proponents of 'liberal' treatment for the Caucasian peoples (alleged to be Aryans, even Ostrogoths) were allowed to form battalions of émigré Georgians under former Georgian army officers, and then tour POW camps, recruiting Georgians. Four Jewish factories in Warsaw were given, to provide funding, to a Georgian and Caucasian committee, whose members included

General Maghlakelidze and Seid Shamil, grandson of the great imam Shamil. Some Georgians overlooked the Nazis' extermination of Jews and the disabled; others would not. The latter, like Prince Irakli Bagrationi, left Berlin. The former, through contacts in the Vichy government, did, however, protect Georgian Jews. They persuaded the Germans that Georgian Jews were in fact ethnic Georgians who had merely decided to practise Judaism. All 650 Jewish Georgians in France had 'Jew' erased from their papers: few went to extermination camps.

The émigrés envisaged reconquering Georgia as a German protectorate, like Slovakia. The Germans encouraged them to consider General Maghlakelidze as the Georgian Führer (they also planned to have a local hero, the novelist Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, lead anti-Soviet resistance). Georgian POWs, however, were merely escaping death from cold, hunger and brutal guards. Using Gestapo funds, Spiridon Kedia and Evgeni Gegechkori, based in Montmartre cafés, retrained Georgian POWs as German auxiliaries. Very soon, Georgian groups such as Tamar I and Tamar II were relegated to rearguard duties, e.g. policing occupied territory, or even disbanded as unfit, in some cases shot for desertion. They were politically recalcitrant, refusing to cooperate with Vlasov's turncoat Russian army (Vlasov was as chauvinist as Stalin), sometimes protesting at mistreatment of civilians, or worried about execution if captured by the Soviets. But a chain of command, from Admiral Canaris of the Abwehr (counter-intelligence) and ex-diplomats like Graf von Schulenburg, orientalists like Theodor Oberländer and polyglot Germans from Tbilisi like Walter von Krutzschenbach, persuaded the Germans that their goal – seizing oilfields, from the north Caucasus (Maikop and Grozny) to Baku – could only be achieved with support from the indigenous peoples, and with Circassian, Chechen, Georgian and Azeri soldiers. Oberländer proposed dividing the Caucasus by linguistic criteria, returning land to the peasantry, and replacing Russian with German as the lingua franca.[32]

In summer 1942 German success in the Caucasus was spectacular: Circassians and the Turkic peoples of Circassia – Karachai and Balkar – greeted Germans as saviours. German alpine troops climbed Mt Elbruz, and occupied some high passes. By September, however, the German push faltered: the desperate battle for Stalingrad absorbed their resources, and lack of roads over the Caucasus precluded full-scale invasion. The Germans held a few square miles of Georgia for a few days: one group crossed the Klukhor Pass, on the road to Sukhumi, reaching the Byzantine fortifications and Svan households at Klych; another group crossed 40 miles further northwest and occupied the Abkhaz village of Pskhu. Elsewhere, snow and Soviet Georgian troops stopped German forces crossing from Ossetia into Svanetia, and even hauled on their backs 20 tonnes of rare metals, like molybdenum, from Ossetia's mines. Beria flew down from Moscow to

strengthen defences, reinforcing the army with fanatical NKVD forces, purging the population of those possibly sympathetic to nationalism or German victory. (In summer 1942 some Georgians, including Vazha Pshavela's youngest son Vakhtang, moved to the mountains to greet the German army.)

In autumn the Germans withdrew northwards: perversely, they now had their greatest success. Not only did many Caucasians (soldiers, camp-followers or refugees) follow them, fearing the NKVD's retribution for collaboration, but Soviet Georgian soldiers crossed over, lured by loudspeaker appeals, radio messages and leaflets from their compatriots. Thousands of Georgians disappeared through the sunflower and cotton fields of the north Caucasian steppes. The Red Army commanders had to replace Georgians with trustworthy Azeris;[33] the Germans complained that they were feeding and training more Georgians than they were fighting. Red Army soldiers found behind German lines men they had gone to school with, and revered army commanders like General Maghlakelidze.

The NKVD infiltrated the defectors; agent 'Shakhovsky' (Petre Nizharadze) recruited anti-German agents from the POW camps. Two men were sent by Akvsenti Rapava to assassinate General Maghlakelidze. (Later, Rapava tried to lure the general to Georgia to lead a fictional uprising.) A Junkers aircraft dropped seven men and a radio transmitter at Bolnisi: four of them were in fact Soviet agents; 30 men and 30 million roubles sent in their wake were wasted. The Gestapo discovered that one Georgian alpine group had its own 'Comintern'. On 8 August 1942 they shot twelve infiltrators, despite Spiridon Kedia's pleas. In 1944, 80 disillusioned Georgians were talked into returning to the Red Army (but were nevertheless all executed). Despite their own doubts, and NKVD orders to execute all parachutists on landing, the Germans parachuted Georgians into enemy territory: the goal was to take Sukhumi and Batumi, thus bottling up Soviet forces on the Black Sea coast, and fomenting a rebellion to open the route to Baku's oilfields. (News of Red Army rampages – rapes in Svanetia, murders in Imeretia – persuaded the Germans that Georgia was ready to rebel.) All the parachutists, however, surrendered or were captured within days. At Vani, near Kutaisi, eight men reported to the authorities, but were taken back to their landing area, publicly shot and buried there. A starving German parachutist was caught stealing potatoes: Rapava ordered him shot, lest he tell POW camp inmates how the NKVD operated. By March 1943 the Germans gave up behind-the-lines operations in Georgia.

As the Germans withdrew, nations 'guilty' of collaboration were deported by Stalin and Beria en masse to Central Asia, the Arctic or Siberia. Those with territory adjacent to Georgia (Chechens, Ingush, the Turkic Karachais and Balkars) suffered first slaughter and then deadly treks by lorry and train, followed by starvation and freezing cold. Beria summoned

his henchmen from all over the USSR, Mikheil Gvishiani flying in from Vladivostok, to participate in the genocidal actions of 1944. Deserted southern Ingushetia was then settled with Georgian highlanders. By August 1944 Beria and Rapava had expelled about 20,000 from Georgia: nearly 15,000 were Turks; 1,764 were Muslim Georgians from Ajaria. Beria can be accused of Georgian chauvinism: he expanded the country northwards, and expelled or oppressed non-Georgians (except, of course, Russians). When in 1945 Molotov tried to bully Turkey into ceding Ardahan and Artvin to Georgia (and Kars to Armenia), thus eventually driving Turkey into the arms of NATO, it was probably at Beria's prompting.

In 1944 Germany, desperate for manpower, actively recruited surviving Soviet POWs. Georgians now served largely as occupying troops, all over Europe. They were reluctant fighters: one marching song (not understood by the German officers) ran: 'I'm not scared by white bread / Spread with butter. / If the enemy dares to try anything / We'll run back to barracks.'[34] In France, the Netherlands, in Prague, Georgians crossed the lines and helped the Resistance fight the Nazis. Led by Evgeni Artemidze (who lived until 22 June 2010), the Tamar II uprising, with the Dutch Resistance, on the island of Texel on 5–6 April 1945 was heroic: 400 Germans were killed. But no allied landing materialized: the Germans executed 565 Georgians, even after unconditional surrender on 8 May. (Many of the surviving 228 Georgians perished in the Gulag.)

Of 8,000 Georgians who fought with the Germans, half were handed to the Soviet authorities by the Americans and British. A Georgian nurse, Tina Balanchivadze, married to a German officer, was forcibly parted from her husband and child and sent to the Gulag.[35] Some Georgians were shot by SMERSH ('Death to Spies', the Red Army's counter-intelligence agency) on the spot, most were consigned to the Gulag; few returned to civilian life, or found asylum. (On 12 November 1951 Kandid Charkviani told Stalin that 5,897 Georgian POWs with family members, 190 repatriated émigrés, 433 relatives and 2,644 illegal entrants were sent to the camps.) Farsighted Georgian émigrés like Spiridon Kedia and Grigol Robakidze (who during the war published a eulogy, *Adolf Hitler, Seen by a Foreign Poet*) fled to Switzerland. (Kedia was mysteriously defenestrated in 1952.)

For Stalin, recovering museum and church treasures from the Mensheviks was as important as retrieving deserters and POWs. In the end-of-war honeymoon, General de Gaulle revealed to Stalin that he and the Georgian general 'Bazorka' Demetre Amilakhvari (who led a Free French corps, dying at El Alamein in 1942) had trained together at Saint-Cyr. Anxious for a seat at the Potsdam conference (which, however, Roosevelt would not concede to France), de Gaulle agreed to return the Georgian treasure to the USSR. Thirty crates still remained in a Marseilles bank, legally belonging to the French government, but still under the cura-

torship of Professor Ekvtime Taqaishvili and ex-foreign minister Evgeni Gegechkori. It had been protected by a Catholic priest, Giorgi Peradze, whom the Nazis brought from Warsaw for an expert opinion and who reported that the treasure was merely of sentimental value to Georgians. (Father Peradze, denounced in spring 1942 by Warsaw Georgians for helping Jews, voluntarily accompanied his Jewish companions into Auschwitz's gas chambers.) Taqaishvili, a depressed widower, was now willing to surrender the treasure:[36] in 1944 the Soviet ambassador to liberated France had sent a lorry to collect the crates, but was thwarted by an intermediary's demand for 50,000 francs. In April 1945 Stalin sent his mentor Professor Sharia via Tehran and Cairo to Paris. The treasure was repatriated, and Taqaishvili became Tbilisi University professor, a Supreme Soviet deputy, and had his scholarly works republished. (His association with Sharia, who was arrested, led to compulsory retirement in 1952; he died in 1953.)

The Free French punished émigré Georgian collaborators: 170 were arrested, another 150 pursued, and 4 were shot. Zhordania was detained for two weeks, released on Léon Blum's intercession, and then briefly gaoled by the Americans. They had confused Noe with his young relative Datiko Zhordania. Datiko was gaoled for ten years; he had worked for the Paris 'Georgian Gestapo', a group run by Shalva Odisharia. (Odisharia pleaded in mitigation that he had blackmailed, rather than denounced Jews, and that he had protected even French Jews by employing them in his 'Gestapo'; he was handed to SMERSH in October 1945 and shot in Tbilisi on 14 January 1947.) The surviving Jewish community compiled a list of 150 Georgians sent by Vichy France to Drancy internment camp and lobbied the authorities on behalf of Georgians who had saved Jews. Nevertheless, Zhordania and Gegechkori, treated as political pariahs, decided to meet Stalin's emissary, Petre Sharia, in Fontainebleau, telling him that they were not anti-Soviet. Sharia met the émigrés and formed a Georgian Patriots' Union to facilitate their repatriation. Of the original Menshevik ministers, only Akaki Chkhenkeli held out, saying the 'Better to die than live to see such disgrace.'

Beria actively supported repatriation, particularly of his wife's relatives. Evgeni Gegechkori was more namesake than kin, and, in any case, now bedridden, but other Gegechkoris returned to Georgia, bypassing the dreaded filtration camps and finding jobs, typically on the Black Sea railway. One controversial repatriate was Tengiz Shavdia, a nephew and foster-brother of Nina Gegechkori-Beria. He had deserted the Red Army to become a German army officer; he was freed from a French prison, escorted the Georgian treasure to the USSR, and then flaunted himself in Tbilisi's streets, even after supposedly receiving a prison sentence in 1952.[37] Akvsenti Rapava, minister of state security in Georgia, was badly compromised: his brother-in-law Givi Zhordania, nephew of Noe Ramishvili,

had fled a murder charge in the 1930s, become a Nazi agent and fought for the Germans; worse, his brother, Colonel Kapiton Rapava, captured by the Germans, joined the Nazi-sponsored Russian Working People's Party Committee, recruiting soldiers for the Germans and helping them make chemical weapons. Georgian émigrés abandoned their covert struggle: one exception is Shaliko Berishvili's brother, Mamia, who crossed from Turkey in 1949 and again in 1950. The first time he learnt that Shaliko was alive in prison; the second time, that their parents and siblings had been denounced and exiled for sheltering him and that their mother had hanged herself in Kazakhstan, while one of their sisters had died in prison.

Victory over Germany brought the USSR's peoples no relief: wartime tolerance ended. In Georgia students who discussed politics were arrested. In 1945 the last pretender to the Georgian throne, the songwriter Petre Bagrationi, was confined to a madhouse, where he caught TB. Life in Georgia was grim: there were only old men, boys and invalids to help the women work the fields and the factories. (The population in 1945, 3,232,000, was 10 per cent smaller than in 1939: it would not return to 1939's level until 1960.) The produce of the countryside and towns went to feed and rebuild European Russia. For want of goods, or a market economy, money lost its value; inflation soared. Serfdom was now introduced into industry, as well as agriculture: from 1948 workers were deprived of passports, and leaving a job became impossible. (In 1949 Beria proposed giving workers and peasants passports and freedom of movement, but his proposal was rejected on the grounds that labour was scarce.) Reluctant workers could be deported for eight years' forced labour in 'remote districts'. Some 9,000 peasant households were resettled between 1947 and 1952 from the highlands to underpopulated areas – Abkhazia, the newly drained Mingrelian marshes and newly irrigated Samgori fields – and left to fend for themselves. Collective farms were merged into even more unwieldy agglomerates. Unachievable targets were set for the 1946–50 five-year plan, pulling peasants off the land and workers onto gigantic Russian industrial projects. Georgian projects, such as expanded tea and citrus plantations, foundered in the severe winter of 1949–50. Peasant private plots were heavily taxed – paying the state 500 roubles (four times more than before the war), and obliged to sell 40 kilograms of meat, 300 litres of milk and 100 eggs to the state, which sold produce for nine times the derisory price it paid the peasant. Revaluation of the rouble in December 1947 annihilated cash savings, thereby curbing inflation and destituting the peasant. (Rumours of revaluation had emptied shops and restaurants of all supplies.) Prices of essential foodstuffs gradually fell, while wages rose, but supplies were scanty and living remained far costlier than in 1940.

What Stalin and his minister of culture, Zhdanov, imposed on the arts and sciences was slavishly imitated in Georgia. In 1948 literary journals dis-

missed editors and printed only conformist work; opera, ballet, theatre, cinema and art galleries were purged of originality or talent. Scholars and scientists had to toe absurd lines drawn by Stalin: Marrism in linguistics, Russian chauvinism in history, Lamarckism in biology.

After the war, Stalin's attitude to Georgia became ambiguous. For all his interest in the Georgian language (he commissioned the eight-volume *Explanatory Dictionary*, and avidly read Georgian publications), he himself transcended ethnicity. 'Our father used to be a Georgian', Stalin's son Vasili told his sister Svetlana. Stalin, addressing Georgian historians, reproached them as 'you Georgians' and Russian historians as 'those Russians'. During the war Beria incarnated both Himmler and Albert Speer, but his all-powerful NKVD was split up, and state security was hived off to Beria's underling, the physicist Vsevolod Merkulov. Then Stalin handed over state security to Viktor Abakumov, 'the foxtrotter', whom Beria came to dislike, while the political commissar Lev Mekhlis took over Beria's job of terrorizing the army. After the war, Beria was wholly occupied in building the Soviet atomic bomb. Until he achieved this in 1949, Georgian after Georgian in the highest echelons of Soviet power, and in Stalin's household, was purged. In 1948 Kandid Charkviani reported to Stalin Professor Petre Sharia's crime: after his son Dazmir was killed by a car, Sharia wrote a 'Tennysonian' lament and illicitly printed 75 copies. Beria's loyal servant in Georgia, Akvsenti Rapava, thanks to his traitor brother, was in 1948 demoted to the ineffectual Ministry of Justice. His replacement, Nikoloz Rukhadze, tightened the screws: in 1948 nine 'nationalist' students were sentenced to 25 years in the camps (a lethal substitute for the now 'abolished' death sentence).

Stalin had independent sources of information on Georgia. What he heard was unacceptable: Beria was running a client state, independent of Moscow's Central Committee, impenetrable to Russians, relying on fellow Mingrelians, rotten with corruption. Kandid Charkviani, Stalin's appointee as first secretary, though no Mingrelian, could not counter Mingrelian influence. In June 1951 Stalin arrested Abakumov, a man too lordly for his role, and put in charge of state security Semion Ignatiev, a virulent enemy of Beria, a Ukrainian railway worker with an enthusiasm for repression. The Mingrelian Affair began. Stalin also met, while on holiday in Tsqaltubo, Beria's former underling, Nikoloz Rukhadze, and ordered him to compromise Beria, his Mingrelian cronies and his wife's supposed relatives in France. Rukhadze and Stalin corresponded in Georgian, so that their plans were hidden from state security bosses; the professional spy, Pavel Sudoplatov, visiting Tbilisi, was, however, aghast at the naivety of Rukhadze's plans. Rukhadze had imprisoned (as a Mingrelian) the one useful link to the émigrés, Grigol Gegelia, and planned to send to Paris his own wife, an opera singer, to lure, or force, the French Gegechkoris and other émigrés back to the USSR.

On Stalin's orders, Rapava and other Mingrelians in the Georgian party and government were arrested. Georgia was divided into two provinces, as in tsarist times; new party secretaries, non-Mingrelians, notably Akaki Mgeladze, took power. Mgeladze became first secretary of the party in March 1952. The ousted Mingrelians were interrogated as nationalist conspirators (and bribe-takers, too). Though never tried, they were doomed by Stalin's explicit equation of bribe-taking with treason. Nikoloz Rukhadze, now Georgian minister for state security, tortured the Mingrelians into admitting they were agents of western imperialism. Kandid Charkviani was lucky merely to be demoted. In April 1952 Beria flew down from Moscow for the tenth congress of the Georgian Communist Party, where he endured seeing Stalin's appointees supplant the Mingrelians. But General Rukhadze was such a bungler that in 1952 Stalin summoned him to Moscow and imprisoned him: the Mingrelians were forgotten in their cells. One Mingrelian, Lavrenti Janjghava, murderer of the actor Samoel Mikhoels, briefly kept his post as head of state security in Belarus.

Under Akaki Mgeladze, Georgia silently endured 'Great Russian chauvinism': Tbilisi was full of Russian state security and party workers helping Nikoloz Rukhadze carry out mass deportations on 25 December 1951. Trains from Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Sukhumi and Batumi transported 20,000 persons to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. They included former political prisoners or deportees (and their families), former POWs (even after leaving SMERSH's filtration camps), repatriated émigrés. Half the deportees, especially the old and the very young, died on the journey or shortly after arrival: they were not to know that their deportation would be revoked in 1954. Deporting Turks and Muslims, removing often skilled personnel only aggravated the demographic disasters of the Second World War. (These were not post-war Georgia's first deportations: over 30,000 Greek refugees from the civil war, settled in Abkhazia, were, with 'undesirable' Armenian dashnaks and Russian dukhobors, deported to Central Asia. Soviet Greeks caught up in the net were brought back a year later.)

Stalin's death on 5 March 1953 brought joy to his associates and to two million Gulag prisoners, but dismay, even despair for Georgia, as elsewhere in the USSR.

22
After Stalin

✠

Within weeks of Stalin's death, Lavrenti Beria, the minister of internal affairs, dominated the collective Soviet leadership. For party and army leaders, this was disturbing. Not only did Beria seem to be a Georgian first, and a Soviet citizen second, he was also regarded as an omniscient, ruthless intriguer capable of betraying any of his colleagues, who loathed him for preying on their wives and daughters. The army never forgave him the murder of Marshal Bliukher. Beria then doomed himself by devoting his hundred days of power to a frantic series of reforms which contradicted everything he formerly stood for and threatened the integrity of the USSR: Stalin's fabricated cases against Kremlin doctors, against Mingrelians and against Jews were quickly reinvestigated, and the surviving detainees freed; hundreds of thousands in the Gulag (but not political prisoners) were freed; non-Russian republics were given autonomy and allowed to use their own language internally; the murderous Hungarian leader Rákosi had to share power with Beria's liberal-minded agent Imre Nagy. Beria proposed reconciliation with Yugoslavia, reunifying Germany and ending the Korean war; a May Day parade was held in Moscow with no pictures of the leaders.

When in June 1953 Beria was seized by his colleagues, and subjected to six months' interrogation leading to his execution, together with his closest associates, in December, the reason was not mass murder, in which Beria's enemies – Khrushchev, Molotov and Malenkov – were complicit: Beria was shot for liberalism (there were no executions, no torture, no foreign or domestic state assassinations, no fabricated cases under Beria between April and June 1953), which threatened to wreck the ship of state.[1]

In Georgia, Beria's accession brought immediate relief. The Mingrelians were freed; surviving Georgian deportees returned; many were compensated and found employment. Once Rukhadze was imprisoned, his deputy, Nodar Kochlashvili, took over and the Georgian KGB became inactive. Akaki Mgeladze, appointed party secretary by Stalin and

Rukhadze, repented ('I didn't know about the handcuffs or the punishment cells,' he said about the 11,000 he deported in 1951) and was then mercifully transferred by Beria to run a forestry nursery and replaced by a newly released Mingrelian, Aliosha Mirtskhulava. Akvsenti Rapava, once freed, left state security to become Georgian minister of state control. In spring 1953 most party and government chiefs in Tbilisi, Sukhumi, Kutaisi and Batumi were replaced by Beria's appointees. Sometimes Beria's original nominees, like Valentin Bakradze, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, returned; otherwise, new men rose from the ranks. Stalin's and Rukhadze's division of Georgia into two provinces was annulled on 23 April. A Mingrelian, Grigol Karchava, was made first secretary of the Party in Abkhazia. Beria's revolution was achieved without repressing Stalin's and Rukhadze's appointees.

Spring ended in June 1953, when Nikita Khrushchev overthrew Beria and, with the Red Army, re-established Russian control of the USSR and the Communist Party, and government control of the security services. In September Khrushchev appointed an army crony, General Vasili Mzhavanadze, first secretary of the Georgian party, and in 1954 another general, Aleksi Inauri, headed the Georgian KGB. (Mzhavanadze spoke better Russian than Georgian, and was soon nicknamed Qvarqvare after the swindler anti-hero of a comedy by Polikarpe Kakabadze; his Ukrainian wife, Viktoria Tereshkevich-Mzhavanadze, was so rapacious and imperious that she was called in party circles 'Queen Victoria'.) Mzhavanadze's iron hand ruled Georgia for nearly twenty years. Aleksi Inauri, who had a comfortable war with the 15th Cavalry Regiment in Iran, liaising with British officers, intimidated Georgia for the next 34 years. Similar men were appointed in Ajaria and Abkhazia.

The difference between Khrushchev's and Beria's coups was that Khrushchev first held a Party Congress to whip up hysterical hatred of his predecessor, and then proceeded to a wave of executions, in Moscow, Leningrad and Tbilisi. The victims, mass murderers, deserved their fate; the injustice lay in selectivity. As many thousands of innocents perished on the orders of Khrushchev, Molotov, Malenkov and Mikoyan as on Beria's, but the underlings of Beria and Rukhadze (and of Viktor Abakumov) paid the penalty. In Moscow on 23 December 1953 Vladimir Dekanozov, Sergo Goglidze, Bogdan Kobulov, Vsevolod Merkulov, Pavel Meshik, Lev Vlodzimirsky were shot together with their master. In Tbilisi, Beria's men lingered until September 1955 before being shot: few mourned the illiterate prince Shalva Tsereteli, whom Beria employed for extra-judicial killings, or Akvsenti Rapava. Those of Beria's men whose work was primarily intelligence, rather than murder, such as Petre Sharia and Chichiko Papulia (head of the NKVD in Abkhazia), spent years in the relative comfort of Vladimir prison;[2] Beria's drivers and pimps, the executioner Sardon

Nadaraia and Rafael Sarkisian, went to grimmer prisons. Others, like Mikeil Gvishiani, were saved by marriage to a Politburo member's daughter, while Lavrenti Tsanava played for time by offering to tell Voroshilov the location of unknown oilfields and coalfields near Kutaisi before committing suicide in October 1955. One of Beria's agents, the KGB resident in Syria and Iraq, was sent to die in a psychiatric hospital. Khrushchev's revenge ended in June 1958 when he hanged the rebel prime minister of Hungary, Imre Nagy – once Beria's agent 'Volodia'.

Beria's execution perturbed many Georgians: even before he was shot, fifteen of his relatives were exiled to the Urals, Kazakhstan and Siberia lest they foment sympathy for him. Aliosha Mirtskhulava complained to Khrushchev on 25 August 1953:

> Beria's close relatives are holding unrestrained, malicious conversations and spreading various provocative rumours. Beria's mother Marta, a deeply religious woman, is visiting churches having prayers said for her son . . . After Beria's exposure there have been more frequent meetings of his relatives at her flat.

Even at party meetings, those who denounced Beria were heckled: 'Are you an ex-prisoner? Nowadays jailbirds come out and say whatever they like!' The party and KGB desperately organized intensive propaganda campaigns throughout Georgia: campaigners were warned of 23 'awkward' questions they should avoid answering, such as whether Beria's crimes were linked to the terror of 1937, or if Beria would be charged with murdering Stalin.[3] Streets or collective farms named after Beria now took Malenkov's name. Thousands of books mentioning Beria had to be recalled and replaced; lists of poets who had dedicated poems to Beria were compiled.[4] Subscribers were told to remove his entry in the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* and insert an extended article on the Behring Straits.

Beria's imposition of the Georgian alphabet on the Abkhaz and South Ossetians was annulled in 1954: South Ossetians now wrote their language in the same Cyrillic as North Ossetians, but the Abkhaz were saddled with a Cyrillic alphabet so complicated that Abkhaz effectively was written only for official purposes. Beria's worst crimes, however, were only desultorily investigated: in December 1954 the *prokuratura* tried to review the Thirteenth Abkhaz Party Conference of 1932, where the Abkhaz complained of Georgian misappropriation, and the Georgians accused the Abkhaz of Trotskyism, but found most records erased. Mzhavanadze permitted the rehabilitation of Titsian Tabidze and Mikeil Javakhishvili, but the date and manner of their deaths remained a state secret. From August 1953 to June 1956 a joint committee of the KGB and prosecution service sought, however, to indict Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, as: a friend of Beria;

a servant of the Menshevik government; and a fascist, Nazi-nominated head of Georgian anti-Soviet resistance.[5] Beria's men had also incriminated Gamsakhurdia, but the party decided against persecuting the nation's foremost historical novelist: Gamsakhurdia and his family were merely subjected to surveillance and harassment.

Khrushchev's new KGB (formerly Ministry of State Security) in Georgia suffered mockery: the Georgian acronym SUKI meant in Russian 'the bitches'. Under Aleksi Inauri and his right-hand man Nodar Maisuradze the Georgian KGB first concentrated on Georgian émigrés. Noe Zhordania died in January 1953, Evgeni Gegechkori in June 1954, but one quarry remained: General Maghlakelidze, the Georgian Führer-to-be. Rapava had failed to kill or trap Maghlakelidze. On 31 August 1954 Maghlakelidze, now an adviser to the German chancellor Adenauer, stayed at a hotel in Berlin close to the Soviet sector: he was kidnapped by KGB agents, who then brought his family to join him first in Moscow, then in Tbilisi. As a Nazi collaborator and the man who arrested the Soviet ambassador to Tbilisi in February 1921, Maghlakelidze may have been surprised to be presented to the public as a happy repatriated pensioner (he remained under KGB surveillance).[6] A KGB agent, Givi Jorbenadze, visited the novelist Grigol Robakidze in his sheltered home in Switzerland, but failed to lure him home; younger émigrés resisted seduction by a Parisian Georgian ballerina working for the KGB.

Like all the USSR, in the mid-1950s Georgia experienced gradual relief from extreme destitution: peasants had more scope to feed themselves and to sell private produce on the market; rigorous restrictions on movement relaxed, to allow labour to move to projects like the Tbilisi metro. Higher education expanded, but Moscow's 'thaw' of 1954 was slow reaching Georgia: journals and book publishing stayed under party control, whereas in Russia the Writers' Union achieved some autonomy. Georgians perceived pernicious Russification: Russians manned new factories; Russian recruits served on the Turkish border, which was reinforced against NATO-member Turkey (and Russian officers treated their Caucasian colleagues and subordinates with contempt); the Russian alphabet replaced the Georgian alphabet in Abkhazian and South Ossetian schools; while Mzhavanadze and Inauri took orders from Moscow and had little local initiative.

Khrushchev's 'secret' speech to the Twentieth Party Congress on 25 February 1956 was a bombshell: read out to every army unit, collective farm and party cell, it was no secret. To Russians, Khrushchev had exposed the murders and lies of the past, exculpating himself and his allies, blaming Stalin and those, now dead or out of favour, who had connived at his terror. To Georgians, however, the speech indicted Lavrenti Beria and Georgia, as though they had caused all the suffering of the USSR. Perverse and naive though it seems, the reaction of Georgian students and school-

leavers was natural: they had been educated to idolize Stalin and Georgia as twin gods. Khrushchev's denunciation, together with creeping Russification, felt like an act of colonial oppression. On 5 March 1956 the third anniversary of Stalin's death, students laid flowers on the embankment at Stalin's statue (then scheduled for demolition): a crowd of onlookers swelled into a demonstration which went on for four days, drawing in perhaps 10,000, many from out of town. Red Army and KGB forces entered Tbilisi. On the evening of 9 March one group tried to seize the main telegraph and radio stations, to broadcast their protest to the world. General Gladkov and his soldiers machine-gunned at least 21 demonstrators. More demonstrators threatened Government House, ripping up and defecating on pictures of the leaders. Faced with unprecedented rebellion, Moscow prepared aeroplanes in Baku and Rostov to bomb Tbilisi. All night troops roamed the streets, shooting young suspects, dispersing the crowds that filled the embankment and main squares. In response, students attacked army officers; one group hijacked an army car, drove to Gori with three blood-spattered flags and induced three busloads from Gori to join Tbilisi's demonstrators.[7] Demonstrations broke out around statues of Stalin in other cities: 2,000 protested in Sukhumi, 2,500 in Kutaisi and 1,000 in Batumi; the authorities there lay low until anger died down. (The Abkhaz authorities were later reprimanded by Tbilisi for 'indecision and complacency, an inability to mobilize the workers to repel brazen provocateurs and saboteurs'.[8]) Major-General Inauri sent panicky telegrams to Moscow: some army officers sympathized with the demonstrators, for they too were trained to fight for Stalin. Speakers made various demands – rehabilitating Beria, crowning Molotov as king of Georgia – but all insisted that Moscow stop belittling Georgia. Not until 24 March could Inauri tell his masters that all was quiet in Tbilisi: by then at least 150 were killed and hundreds badly wounded. On 28 March, to prevent further demonstrations, Inauri led a party commission expelling from Tbilisi 'all persons not employed in socially useful labour'.[9] Mzhavanadze's loyalties were possibly split: he then rebuilt Gori's Stalin museum.

The Georgian dissident movement was baptized in fire. Secret societies were inspired by the March riots: Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's son, Zviad, a psychologically delicate youth of seventeen, was arrested. Together with Merab Kostava, he resurrected a society called the Gorgasliani ('Follower of King Vakhtang Gorgasali') which he had helped form in 1953 to defend Beria's reputation against Khrushchev. Gamsakhurdia, Kostava and five other schoolboys fly-posted proclamations, expressing solidarity with anti-Soviet rebellions in Poznań and in Hungary. The seven boys were arrested at the end of 1956. (They received suspended sentences after Mzhavanadze told Khrushchev that he feared negative publicity if Gamsakhurdia's father died of distress.) In Sighnaghi, in Kakhetia,

another student organization, *Simebi* ('musical strings'), arose. Over the next twenty years these societies conflated into a dissident movement so widespread that even Inauri, using harassment, psychiatric hospitals, blackmail and bribery, could not quash it: he found his own grandchildren involved.

Politically, the Georgian party was inert. At the 7th Plenum of the party in November 1957, the only memorable speech (greeted with 'thunderous applause') was by a hitherto unknown young man, Eduard Shevardnadze, on the subject of peace.[10]

Khrushchev's often demented policies earned him more hatred in Georgia. The campaign, against scientific advice, to plough virgin land caused not only dust bowls in Kazakhstan, but also the loss of cattle pasture in Georgia and the diversion of labour and technology to doomed projects. After his visit to the USA in 1958, Khrushchev ordered maize to be sown: in Kakhetia vineyards were grubbed up, but maize withered. The plan in the 1960s to overtake the USA in milk and meat, necessitating more than doubling production, meant that cattle were slaughtered prematurely: dairy and meat products became scarce. Projects, such as fertilizer plants in Rustavi and the locomotive factory in Tbilisi, brought limited benefits: new jobs went to Russians or Azeris, and the pollution from cement factories made life in towns like Zestaponi unbearable. Khrushchev's pet project, the giant Enguri Hydroelectric plant on the Abkhaz–Mingrelian border, started in 1961, becoming operational in 1987, although for twenty years its construction damaged the ecology and flooded the area with migrants, cement and skimmed-off budgetary funds. Khrushchev's retrospective imposition of the death penalty for fraud, theft and speculation raised the annual number of executions in the USSR to a Stalinist level of 3,000, and seemed aimed at the Caucasus, where economic crime was rife. Khrushchev's brinkmanship led to a shelter being built under Tbilisi's Botanical Gardens, to ensure that the party elite survived a nuclear holocaust. Despite improved living standards and, in Georgia, a prosperous class of graduates with no apparent source of income, despite Moscow celebrating Georgian culture and the 1,500th anniversary of Tbilisi in 1958, Khrushchev remained disliked. A group of men were convicted of plotting to murder him when he came to Georgia: they were spared execution. When Khrushchev removed Stalin's body from the Red Square Mausoleum and his face from renominated banknotes in 1961, it was the last straw. With enormous satisfaction General Inauri, on Moscow's orders, in October 1964 detained Khrushchev at his Black Sea palace at Pitsunda, escorting him to the Kremlin where he was dismissed from all his posts.

Leonid Brezhnev's assumption of power made little difference: in 1964 Khrushchev had begun a crackdown on dissident artists and writers, using psychiatric medication, instead of bullets. The Mzhavanadze government continued, its tranquillity assured by tolerating corruption. A shad-

ow economy produced and sold goods made from stolen state materials; all-pervasive bribery gave many Georgians – university teachers, doctors, party officials, policemen – an almost capitalist standard of living. A 'Georgians first' policy discriminated against minorities like Abkhaz, Ossetes, Armenians, Azeris. Lowlier professions were reserved for non-Georgians: traffic police were Ossetians; street-sweepers, Kurds; shop assistants, Armenians; bus conductors and domestic servants, Ukrainians.

Mzhavanadze's good relations with Leonid Brezhnev could not cancel out reports of Georgian corruption and nepotism (or resentment at its relative freedom and prosperity, despite the low official salaries and agricultural production). On 22 February 1972 the Twenty-fifth Party Congress denounced the Tbilisi party's vices. Three campaigns were initiated. One was against 'harmful traditions and customs' – from attending religious festivals to holding extravagant weddings and funerals: new civic festivals, such as 'Tbilisi day' were instituted. Another fought nationalist sentiment. A third railed at the illegal privatization of state property. These campaigns reflected a widespread official reaction throughout the USSR, but all fostered resentment against Moscow. Abuses of 'socialism' just increased: between 1975 and 1980 the 'private' sector grew from a third to nearly half of Georgia's economy.

In 1972, not just Tbilisi, but all Georgia had a major reshuffle. In July Eduard Shevardnadze, a rising star for fifteen years, now Georgian minister of internal affairs (effectively chief of police), became first secretary of the Tbilisi party; in September, he was made first secretary of the Georgian Communist Party. (The Mzhavanadzes retired, with their looted icons, to live outside Moscow, within walking distance of Viacheslav Molotov's dacha.) Because Shevardnadze had an Orthodox mother, and his wife Nanuli had lost her father in the Great Terror of 1937, many hoped he would prove a liberal. Shevardnadze introduced a style new to the USSR, let alone Georgia: he appeared unannounced in public places, even workers' canteens; he arrested officials in broad daylight; he made unscripted speeches (more often in Russian than Georgian); he shook the hands of bemused foreigners. He is said to have stripped illicit Rolex watches from the raised hands of party delegates during a vote. But he had a nastier side: 'Beat your own people so that outsiders fear you,' he is said to have instructed his underlings.[11]

Violent crime caused public, as well as political concern: a report of July 1973 noted 29 murders and 27 rapes in the first quarter alone.[12] War was declared on corruption: one prominent victim was Petre Gelbakhiani, rector of the Medical Institute, alleged to charge every applicant 50,000 roubles. Probably guilty only of nepotism, Gelbakhiani faced the death penalty, but was given fifteen years in jail. (In 1994 the rector's grandson, also Petre Gelbakhiani, was sentenced to death by Shevardnadze for attempt-

ing to assassinate the warlord Jaba Ioseliani.) Winemakers of Kakhetia were indicted for adding sugar, even though they were forced to do so by Shevardnadze's insistence on higher production. Corruption continued unabated: it was often impossible in 1973 to fly to Moscow, because scheduled aircraft were full of mandarins for Moscow's private markets.

Shevardnadze pursued a nationalist agenda: he had over 100 Fereidanis, whose ancestors had been deported by Shah Abbas to Iran, repatriated: to Georgia's joy, the Fereidanis had preserved their Christianity, as well as their native Georgian, though they disconcerted their hosts by incorporating Islam into their beliefs, and some of them decided to return to Iran.[13] Conversely, in late 1972 Shevardnadze summoned leaders of the Jewish community to a meeting: telling them the bad news (a purge of the Jewish-dominated black market was imminent), and the good (he had arranged for Georgian Jews to receive exit visas for Israel). In 1970 there were 55,400 Jews in Georgia; by 1979 this had been reduced to 28,300.[14] Ashdod and Haifa acquired Georgian communities, while the market in Tbilisi, on which even official institutions relied, collapsed. Until 1973 cars crawled the kerb near the collective farm market, and ordered what they wanted: a tyre for a Mercedes, or a typewriter ribbon. On their return in 24 hours, the goods were handed through the car door for cash.

Handling cash was now dangerous, but favours were still exchanged: the police chief's idle son passed his exams, because the professor's son escaped a charge of manslaughter by dangerous driving. All Georgia knew that surgeons operated only on 'grateful' patients. On the roads a driving licence handed to a traffic policeman had a three-rouble note inside if it was to be returned. Protesters suffered as before: Valentina Pailodze, a church choir leader indicted in 1974 for complaining of patriarchate corruption, was told by the KGB that Shevardnadze had ordered her arrest on any pretext.[15] In Tbilisi's remand prison, detainees were beaten until they confessed or died. Only in 1975, when a victim died in his cell, instead of the prison hospital, thus hindering a cover-up, were torturers (often violent criminals earning a reduced sentence) tried for murder. One, Tsirekidze, expressed puzzlement: Shevardnadze had shaken his hand, he was praised for cracking 200 cases. In the end he had a mere six years added to his sentence.[16]

Shevardnadze did, however, woo the intelligentsia, transferring directorships of theatres and academic institutes from Mzhavanadze's cronies to qualified intellectuals. Like many party bosses, Shevardnadze loved cinema: Georgian film-makers could create works non-conformist in genre or politics. Even in 1967, under Mzhavanadze, Tengiz Abuladze filmed the expressionist *Vedreba* (*Entreaty*), based on three of Vazha Pshavela's tragic poems. In 1980 Shevardnadze encouraged the making of *Monanieba* (*Repentance*), although its overt religiosity and denunciation of Stalin and

Beria made it unshowable in the USSR until 1986, when it fed the public's appetite for reform and honesty. But Shevardnadze had the actor Giorgi Kobakhidze, who played the tyrant's grandson Tornike, shot for attempting to hijack an aircraft; Abuladze had to remake the film. *Monanieba* told the story of Georgia and in particular of the bereft heroine, based on Ketevan Orakhelashvili whose husband the composer Mikeladze and whose parents were killed by Beria. It was also the story of hundreds of thousands of Stalin's victims. It gave Georgian artists and Shevardnadze moral primacy in the process of perestroika.

Shevardnadze's wooing of intellectuals coincided with a surge of dissidence. Mzhavanadze's corruption infected the KGB, which gave exhibits from museums and icons from churches to compliant foreigners, with the complicity of the new patriarch Davit VI, a pawn in the hands of a corrupt Bishop Gaioz. Investigation was foiled by arson: Inauri's KGB was untouchable. In 1973 Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava published the underground *The Golden Fleece* exposing KGB corruption, and recording the oppression of Georgian intellectuals in the 1920s. By 1975 Gamsakhurdia became influential. The USSR had signed the Helsinki convention on security, gaining recognition of the inviolability of its borders, but forced in exchange to acknowledge human rights. Dissident movements throughout the Soviet bloc now had guarantees against the communist authorities' retaliation. Gamsakhurdia formed his own 'Helsinki Group', and joined the Moscow branch of Amnesty International. He induced Congressman Waggoner of Louisiana to read out to Congress Patriarch Ambrosi's protest to the Genoa Conference of 1922: Waggoner then argued that the USA should recognize *de jure* independent Georgia as it did the Baltic States.

Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, the country's greatest living writer, died in 1975, leaving a testament in which he refused burial in the Pantheon, because 'in every country Christ and Judas are mentioned in the same breath, but only in Georgia are they buried together'. (The issue of *Mnatobi* that printed this testament was pulped.) Zviad Gamsakhurdia inherited not just his father's Tbilisi mansion but also his mantle, and lambasted the government and party. In April 1976 Zviad accused KGB agents of attempting to poison his father, of burgling their house and trying to confiscate his father's archive (he also accused the KGB of faking the suicide of the poet Galaktion Tabidze, who fell from a hospital window in 1958). So perturbed was Shevardnadze that he held meetings with the Union of Writers, the KGB and the party all summer.[17] Zviad and Kostava had for years been a thorn in the flesh of the government: they printed dissident materials, including Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*; they protested at the destruction of the ecology and historical heritage such as the demolition by the artillery practice of the Red Army of Davit Garesja and Gelati monasteries. Dissident

lobbying stopped the building of a nuclear power station on the Black Sea and a railway under the Daryal Pass, although it failed to stop the Roki tunnel now linking South and North Ossetia.

At first Shevardnadze and Inauri fought dissidence with disinformation: Gamsakhurdia's writings, and the findings of a prosecutor, Davit Koridze, who tried to investigate the looting of museums, were declared by foreign friends, such as Professor David Marshall Lang, to be the forgeries of Paris émigrés. Dissidents were attacked with toxic gas. Zviad's publication 'On Tortures in Georgia' in *The Chronicle of Current Events* was the last straw. In 1976 Zviad collaborated closely with Moscow dissidents Andrei Sakharov, Amalrik and Iuri Orlov, and was frequently detained by the KGB: friends in the west (including the author of this history) invited him to Britain and Switzerland, but were told that the sum they were prepared to pay the Union of Writers was insufficient. In spring 1977 the Union of Writers in Tbilisi was instructed to condemn Zviad: two poets, Murman Lebanidze and Zviad's godmother, Ana Kalandadze, dared to defend him (but nevertheless also voted to expel him). Those who duplicated and bound Zviad's materials were dismissed from their jobs. Zviad was expelled from the university and arrested. The KGB compiled a 56-volume treason case against him and Merab Kostava. In August Zviad was sent to the Serbsky psychiatric unit in Moscow, from which the World Congress of Psychiatrists in Honolulu and the French Psychiatric Association finally saved him, by denouncing the Soviet use of psychiatry as torture. By spring 1977, however, Zviad was broken, and agreed to recant in an interrogation edited into a television documentary. (Zviad's admirers believed he was drugged; two western journalists were prosecuted in Moscow for dismissing the interview as a fabrication.) In Tbilisi, Bishop Gaioz led a press campaign against dissidents. On 19 May 1977 Zviad and Merab received three years in the camps and two years' exile; Zviad's doctor Samkharadze was locked up in a psychiatric hospital.[18] Shevardnadze immediately released Zviad 'to do cultural work with Georgian shepherds' for two years in the Nogai steppes, while Merab, who had not repented, spent ten years in the Gulag.[19] Inauri, now in his 70s, summoned Zviad to Tbilisi in 1979 and assured him of personal protection. Despite being nominated by the USA for the Nobel Peace Prize, Zviad was now shunned by both communists and dissidents as a KGB-protected pariah: Shevardnadze had won the first round of a 20-year duel. Gamsakhurdia tried to justify his recantation: he had saved his associates from further persecution, protected his achievements, stopped the destruction of Davit-Garesja monastery, and helped Shevardnadze save the Georgian language's official status. He wrote to *Pravda* that he had not repented his patriotic or humanitarian work. Now immersed in religious study, he developed a morbidly Messianic self-esteem.

Terrified of another March 1956, the Georgian party stood back: to the ringing of church bells, hundreds of thousands had attended Konstantine Gamsakhurdia's funeral; the public, encouraged by Shevardnadze's democratic rhetoric, expressed their anger. In 1977 a new patriarch, Ilia II, a genuine theologian and Georgian nationalist, but, like every senior Orthodox cleric in the USSR, vetted by the KGB, bridged the gap between state and people: new churches opened, priests and monks were ordained over the next six years (in 1983 the militant atheist Iuri Andropov took power in Moscow and repressed Orthodoxy).

Ironically, Zviad and Shevardnadze were united in deploring resurgent Abkhaz nationalism: in 1973, when the Tbilisi took direct control of the resort of Gagra, the Abkhaz insisted that ethnic Abkhaz should run their autonomous republic, although they were outnumbered by both Kartvelians (Mingrelians, rather than Georgians) and Russians. Abkhaz activists tore down signs in Georgian and resisted compulsory Georgian in schools. In 1977, 130 Abkhaz intellectuals petitioned the Kremlin to take Abkhazia into the Russian Federation. Shevardnadze was hissed by a Sukhumi audience. The Kremlin forced Tbilisi to yield, and in 1978 the Sukhumi Teacher Training College became the Abkhaz State University, one small sector actually teaching in Abkhaz. (In Tbilisi there were counter-protests, when the Georgian-language theatre in Sukhumi was threatened.)

Georgia had a bigger fight on its hands when the new Soviet constitution of 1978 removed the clause that made Georgian the republic's official language, and implied that minorities in Georgia should use Russian, not Georgian, to communicate with Tbilisi; moreover, at all levels of education, one major subject would have to be taught in Russian, and doctoral theses would need to be in Russian. On 14 April 1978 students and professors protested outside the university. Tens of thousands of demonstrators – women and children amongst them – besieged Government House. The army and KGB prepared to repeat the atrocities of March 1956; Shevardnadze frantically telephoned Moscow, until the Kremlin reinstated Clause 75, guaranteeing Georgian as the official language.

In the early 1980s Georgian public opinion had further victories: depopulation of the highlands was reversed; dismissed professors were reinstated; church-going was tolerated, partly because Gamsakhurdia besieged Shevardnadze with complaints.[20] But Andropov's authoritarianism forced Shevardnadze to toe the line in 1983: the Georgians had to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Georgievsk and thank Russia. Worse happened on 18 November that year: several young men and a girl hijacked an aircraft leaving Tbilisi for Batumi and Leningrad: they aimed to tell President Reagan of life under totalitarian rule. But instead of obeying the hijackers, the pilot landed at Tbilisi, where the hijackers' parents offered to remove their children from the aircraft. Instead Soviet *spetsnaz*

('special purpose') troops opened fire, killing nine, including three crew and two passengers, riddling other passengers with bullets. The surviving hijackers were tried, together with Father Teodore Chikhladze, their theology teacher, although he had not met the hijackers for over a year. After many petitions for and against mercy, three hijackers and the priest were executed simultaneously at Ortachala prison on 23 August 1984. Shevardnadze assured the parents that their sons would just serve a few years in the Magadan Gulag, but when they enquired a year later, they were told to collect death certificates from the registry. This cowed submission to Andropov's brutality lost Shevardnadze any popularity won by his earlier nationalist stance, or by the relative prosperity that Georgia enjoyed in the 1980s.

When in 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev came to power, promising an era without lies, repression or confrontation, he chose Eduard Shevardnadze as Soviet foreign minister. Although Shevardnadze's only foreign language was Russian, he had the actor's charm and body language needed to persuade the world of a new, well-intentioned USSR; in early July 1985 he left to join Moscow's Politbiuro, leaving a hapless mediocrity, Jumber Patiashvili, to undertake Georgia's perestroika ('restructuring'). Perestroika was unconvincing in Georgia: for one thing, the Georgian translation *gardakmna* had been a favourite term of Beria's in the 1930s, for another, it also meant 'degeneration'. The Georgian KGB was facing not just opposition to the Afghan war and to lies and corruption; it was also battling with a national movement envisaging independence. In May 1987 Merab Kostava was released; his public embrace of Zviad Gamsakhurdia restored the latter's credibility. Soon, other national movements, led by the poets Mukhran Machavariani and Gia Chanturia, rivalled the Helsinki Group, and they were unencumbered by Gamsakhurdia's and Kostava's anthroposophical mysticism. The unofficial opposition could block environmentally harmful dams and railways, but not the Red Army's artillery practice on ancient monuments. The KGB, even under Inauri's successor Gumbaridze, still beat and arrested dissidents and their families, even if forced by public pressure to release them. Gamsakhurdia could not be stopped flying to Moscow, giving interviews to CNN and, in May 1988, being received with his family by President Reagan. On 26 May, for the first time since 1922, crowds came onto the streets of Tbilisi to acclaim the anniversary of Georgia's declaration of independence (and Merab Kostava's birthday). In autumn public demonstrations in Tbilisi and Batumi demanded independence.

Demanding independence was a kick at the wasp nest of Caucasian passions. Abkhaz feared subjugation in an independent Georgia, and on 18 March 1989, at the village of Lykhny, some 30,000 people were gathered by the Ajdgylara ('Unity') movement to demand that Abkhazia be a full republic of the Soviet Union. Gamsakhurdia and Kostava were now allies of the

head of the Georgian Communist Party, Jumber Patiashvili. They flew into Sukhumi to rouse Abkhazia's Mingrelians (both dissidents were of Mingrelian origin) and Georgians. Strikes and demonstrations became brawls and riots. Kartvelians at the university of Sukhumi split off to form their own university, and created a focus for civil war. In South Ossetia, Ademon Nykhas, a human rights' organization, demanded full autonomy or union with North Ossetia in the Russian Federation. Since South Ossetia was a Soviet-created entity, Georgians wanted to merge it with Kartli: in January 1989 hundreds of buses and cars left Tbilisi to occupy Tskhinvali. Blocked by Ministry of the Interior's armoured cars at the border village of Ergneti, they were cajoled by Gumbaridze in person into turning back.

In Tbilisi, dissidents had learned new techniques: from autumn 1988 to April 1989 they brought onto the streets not just students, but also factory workers and, after a match, 40,000 football fans, paralysing Tbilisi and disabling the police and KGB. Thousands of workers streamed into Tbilisi from the plants of Rustavi. Hunger strikers camped outside party headquarters: Gorbachev was forced to address the demonstrators by radio from Moscow. Patiashvili and Gumbaridze appealed to Moscow's Politburo for help; Ministry of the Interior troops were sent to reinforce Red Army forces in the Caucasus. Shevardnadze broke off work to fly into Tbilisi on 8 April and, telephoning Gorbachev in London, was given a free hand to act. In the early hours of 9 April, Patriarch Ilia II, well aware of the KGB's plans, begged the demonstrators to come to church and pray instead of shouting 'Independence'. Gamsakhurdia was warned to disperse the demonstration, but it was now too large and too angry. Exasperated ministry of the interior troops then attacked the crowd with sapper's shovels and gas pistols. Twenty-one were killed on the spot, some battered, and hundreds of others gassed, apparently by a concentrated tear-gas, chloroacetophene; possibly by nerve gas.[21] The leaders were arrested and beaten by the KGB; Tbilisi was put under a curfew.

This unmitigated disaster, like the killings in Vilnius and the riots in Prague, furthered the disintegration of the whole Soviet bloc. In vain, Shevardnadze released dissidents, lifted the curfew and held an inquiry into the gassing of demonstrators armed with nothing but flags and candles. Jumber Patiashvili resigned his post in favour of Givi Gumbaridze, but the Communist Party and KGB were irrelevant once power shifted to the streets. On Independence Day, two months later, an even bigger meeting led to the boycott of service in the Soviet Army. An ugly hostility to ethnic minorities, Abkhaz, Ossetian Armenian, Azeri or Dagestani, more than to the Russian overlords, gave a fascist aura to Gamsakhurdia's speeches and the pamphlets circulated by pseudo-historians and pseudo-linguists, who claimed that Christian Kartvelians were the only citizens of Georgia and that all others were more or less undesirable 'guests'. Even reputable lin-

guists like Tamaz Gamqrelidze subscribed to absurd theories that 'Abkhaz' originally denoted Georgian tribes and that today's Abkhaz, now called Apsua, were impostors, who had recently crossed the Caucasus.

In October 1989 Kostava, coming from Kutaisi to Tbilisi, died in a car crash. His funeral was another mass demonstration: without Kostava's introversion and caution, Gamsakhurdia became unhinged. Václav Havel, Czechoslovakia's new president, secured Gamsakhurdia immunity from arrest and an introduction to Boris Yeltsin. Georgians hoped for a 'velvet' revolution, like the Czechoslovaks'; in March 1990 a National Forum prepared for free elections to a multi-party parliament, a bloodless dismantling of communist institutions, and national independence. But the anarchic disintegration of the USSR wrecked the economy, wiping out savings and pensions with inflation, closing factories, leaving farmland fallow; social cohesion disappeared, as the forces of law and order withdrew. Caches of arms were seized by criminal or political gangs. Jaba Ioseliani, a feared 'thief-in-the-law' (a criminal as much feared by the police as by fellow criminals) who had on his release studied for a doctorate in oriental languages and become a drama lecturer, formed a militia, Mkhedrioni ('Warriors'), ostensibly to establish an independent, ethnically cleansed Georgia. Gamsakhurdia was unnerved. He persuaded the political groups (his own Helsinki Union, the Society of St Ilia [Chavchavadze] the Just, the Kostava Society and others) to join a Round Table under his chairmanship. Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni resurrected the émigré right-wing White George and defended the National Forum. Gamsakhurdia's fanatical middle-aged, black-garbed female followers, nicknamed the Dedrioni ('Mother Warriors'), became notorious for stalking and assaulting, sometimes with scissors, suspected 'Red' intellectuals.

Shevardnadze maintained contacts with unofficial leaders, who used proof of such contacts to discredit each other. Shevardnadze warned Russian dissidents of Gamsakhurdia's racism: Gamsakhurdia was condemned in Prague and Tbilisi as an enemy of ethnic minorities. But the Round Table's path to power was easy: they blocked the railway junction at Samtredia, where the line from Moscow met the line from Batumi, and starved Tbilisi of petrol and cigarettes until 19 August 1990. Then, after two months' paralysis, the Georgian Supreme Soviet, pressed by Moscow's minister of the interior, with a crowd about to storm the building, voted for free elections, following rules which gave the winning party total control. Georgia's first free elections for over 70 years were held on 28 October 1990: Gamsakhurdia's Round Table won just over half the vote and nearly two-thirds of the seats; the communists had about 30 per cent of the vote and a quarter of the seats. On 14 November 1990 Gamsakhurdia was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet, undertaking to update the 1921 constitution.

Georgia plunged into chaos. Gamsakhurdia treated ministers like domestic servants, refusing to admit his incompetence in economic, diplomatic or

military affairs. Armed gangs, not all Mkhedrioni, robbed houses and mugged citizens. Services broke down, as hydroelectric stations and gas-pumping stations were neglected; hyper-inflation made the U.S. dollar the only acceptable currency. Hospitals, schools, shops and agriculture stopped functioning. Intermittently, Gamsakhurdia's government secured international aid in kind or in cash, much of which was pocketed by officials and ministers. For a time, Gamsakhurdia reconciled himself with the warlords, Jaba Ioseliani and Tengiz Kitovani (art teacher, now leader of a 'National Guard'), and with the most influential of the young nationalists, Gia Chanturia, and won popularity by restoring to Ilia II the rights of an autocephalic patriarch.

Ethnic conflict dominated the agenda. The Abkhaz elected as President Vladislav Ardzinba, an unexpectedly adroit and adamant politician, who ensured that the Abkhaz, though only a fifth of the population, dominated the Abkhaz parliament. Abkhazia was led by three liberal intellectuals: Ardzinba, an expert in ancient Anatolian languages, Iuri Voronov, an archaeologist, and Stanislav Lakoba, a historian, a rare surviving relative of the revered Nestor Lakoba. The Ossetians in Tskhinvali chose Torez Kulumbegov, a communist schoolmaster, an easy target for Georgian nationalists: in December 1990, a severe winter, the Ossetians' gas and electricity were cut off, while the Mkhedrioni hijacked lorry-loads of food sent through the Roki tunnel from North Ossetia. Kulumbegov was invited to Tbilisi in January 1991 and imprisoned; Georgian gangs burned some 117 Ossetian villages, and Georgian villages were burned in response. Ethnic cleansing was a self-fulfilling policy in that just one incident led to a full-blown purge: streams of refugees headed for Vladikavkaz or for Gori, and South Ossetia's population was almost halved. (Not until December 1991, at Amnesty International's insistence, was Kulumbegov released, to hold a referendum in South Ossetia and become president of an unrecognized enclave.) Such were the birth pangs of independent Georgia.

23
Independence Restored

✠

I used to think that, as the Georgians loved life, had a sense of humour, managed to preserve their heart and ancient chivalry and had thus remained individualists, sceptics etc, they could not be fully enslaved . . . I came back and found this was an illusion, that the process of mental, spiritual, verbal degradation had gone too far.
Merab Mamardashvili (*Novoe russkoe slovo*, 25–6, xi, 1995)

On 31 March 1991 a plebiscite declared Georgia an independent nation. Gamsakhurdia unleashed an aggressive campaign to reincorporate Abkhazia and South Ossetia (now Samachablo, 'the Machabeli lands'); he did, however, assure Turkey that he had no claims on former Georgian territory to the south. The nation was gripped by mindless chauvinism:[1] voices of reason, such as the philosopher Merab Mamardashvili, were hounded to silence, even death. The Kremlin, at Shevardnadze's urging, and distracted by the slaughter in Nagorny Karabakh, stood back; but the international community, wary of ongoing conflict and uncertain of Moscow's policy, withheld recognition from Georgia. Gamsakhurdia was hemmed in by militia: his minister of defence, Tengiz Kitovani, had privatized a guard of 5,000 men, while Jaba Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni, Giorgi Qarqarashvili's White Eagles, Zurab Samushia's White Legion and Dato Shengelaia's Forest Brothers were bandits masked as paramilitaries. From 19 to 21 August 1991, when Gorbachev was holed up in the Crimea, and five elderly drunks staged a putsch in Moscow, Gamsakhurdia lost his nerve and kowtowed to Moscow. Yeltsin's triumph over the *putchisty* brought peace to Moscow, but chaos to the Caucasus: by inviting everybody 'to take as much sovereignty as you want', Yeltsin licensed every breakaway republic and enclave. Gamsakhurdia assumed dictatorial powers, but the crowds that now filled the streets of Tbilisi were hostile. He banned newspapers, arrested former allies (notably, Ioseliani),[2]

expelled communist parliamentarians, bombed Tskhinvali, and fired on a Tbilisi crowd: this dementia, and the criminalization of power, doomed his presidency. The White Eagles seized the television station; national guardsmen joined both sides; and the city was plundered and shelled for three months by warlords; until, on 22 December 1991, Kitovani and Ioseliani (who had escaped his burning gaol) brought in tanks, shelled the president's bunker (destroying KGB and Interior Ministry archives) and took power on 2 January 1992.[3]

As respectable cover, Ioseliani and Kitovani had the blessing of Ilia II; they released the Ossetian leader Kulumbegov and then appointed as prime minister Tengiz Sigua, the communist who presided over the elections of 1990. (Ioseliani still took pride in his crimes: when the author of this history met him in summer 1992, he had, as a memento, photographs of 49 machine-gunned Ossetian refugees on his desk.) One hundred and thirteen government supporters died before Gamsakhurdia fled, first to Armenia and then to Grozny, where General Dudaev sheltered his government in exile.

Kitovani's troops rushed to Mingrelia to prevent a Zviadist uprising: Kitovani assured Ajarians and Abkhaz that he respected their autonomy, thus creating for Aslan Abashidze, the virtually hereditary ruler of Ajaria, a lucrative fief that would endure for a decade. Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni murdered and looted rebellious Mingrelians. With, as Ioseliani put it, 'an unknown artist and a notorious bandit' in charge, Georgia became a pariah in the international community.

Fortunately, Shevardnadze's needs coincided with the new republic's. Despite Boris Yeltsin's friendship, he had outlived his usefulness in Russia, where the military and the KGB detested him for dismantling the Communist empire. Shevardnadze had himself baptized into the Georgian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Ilia II acting as his godfather. On 7 March 1992 he arrived in Tbilisi, to a welcome inconceivable three years earlier. He joined the junta of Kitovani, Ioseliani, and their interim 'prime minister' Tengiz Sigua; within a fortnight Shevardnadze secured international recognition for Georgia, while reneging on his promise to join Yeltsin's Commonwealth of Independent States. The USA, Germany, Britain and Turkey opened embassies in Tbilisi. The moribund economy showed signs of recovery. Shevardnadze, justifying his nickname 'the White Fox', merged militias into a regular Georgian army, made popular gestures, for instance demanding that Russia vacate its Georgian bases, and turned himself from a figurehead into an acclaimed dictator.[4]

The new Georgian army, however, was no match for the guerrillas now repelling them in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the latter an enclave of arms and drug trafficking and currency forgery. Within days of Shevardnadze's return, a Zviadist 'Committee of National Disobedience'

seized Zugdidi, killing six soldiers. In May Shevardnadze negotiated a ceasefire in the ruins of Tskhinvali. On 13 June a car bomb aimed at Jaba Ioseliani killed five bystanders. On 24 June 1992 the Tbilisi television station was seized, apparently by Zviadists: they were easily overcome (the event was the first of several *coups de théâtre* known as 'The Eduard Show'). The next day a mob burned down Gamsakhurdia's mansion in Griboedov Street. Shevardnadze went on to make peace with Russia and secure Georgia membership of the United Nations; he persuaded the UN to approve a force of 600 Russians, 500 Ossetians and 400 Georgians as peacekeepers, and the OSCE to send observers to Tskhinvali.

The restoration of the 1921 constitution on 4 August 1992 completely changed the outlook: Abkhazia was outraged at losing autonomy, and announced a reversion to the 1925 Soviet constitution, as a fully independent republic. When Shevardnadze's interior minister went to Sukhumi to negotiate, he and his entourage were kidnapped: Shevardnadze sent 3,000 soldiers, ostensibly to protect the railway line that linked Russia to Georgia and Armenia through Abkhazia. On 14 August the Abkhaz mobilized. Although Zviadists held several Mingrelian towns, including Senaki, Shevardnadze avoided confronting a Mingrelian–Abkhaz alliance. But a bloody civil war ensued: the Georgians sent marines to seize Gagra and cut off Abkhazia from Russia, and then besieged Sukhumi's parliament. They withdrew from Sukhumi when their hostages were released, but made General Kitovani military commander of the city. The Abkhaz president Ardzinba's government fled north to the Russian army base at Gudauta and called on the north Caucasian peoples to aid Abkhazia. The response was extraordinary: Chechens came, along with Cossacks whose great-grandfathers had driven the Abkhaz into the sea. By October the Georgians were driven back from Gagra to Sukhumi. Kitovani burned down Abkhazia's national treasures – archives, libraries, institutes, botanical gardens.[5] This cultural genocide sidelined Ardzinba's circle: gunmen took over, and Russian soldiers offered arms and assistance. (In Ossetia, a similar process sidelined Kulumbegov and installed a boxer, Eduard Kokoity.)

Shevardnadze, after an assassination attempt in Abkhazia, panicked. He made the gangster Aslan Abashidze of Ajaria (a Muslim who had, like Shevardnadze, just been baptized) his vice-president. In Georgia, after the 11 October elections, febrile patriotism sent hundreds of inept boys and girls to be slaughtered in Abkhazia. Shevardnadze nearly died in one attack (another cliffhanger in 'the Eduard Show'). The Georgians downed a helicopter, killing 58 refugees. Yeltsin offered to intervene if Georgia joined the CIS, a step too far for Tbilisi's nationalists; Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the UN would only send observers. Despite having twice as many men and tanks as the Abkhaz, the Georgians were being driven out of Sukhumi. Surviving a helicopter crash on 29 April 1993, Shevardnadze turned on his own gen-

erals: Kitovani was sacked, and the 27-year-old Giorgi Qarqarashvili of the White Eagles was promoted from captain to lead the army. While Qarqarashvili promised to exterminate the Abkhaz nation,[6] Yeltsin arranged a ceasefire on 20 May 1993, giving Abkhazia some autonomy and freedom from Georgian troops. In Georgia real starvation set in: the introduction of a new currency, the kupon, neither stopped inflation nor revived a dead economy.

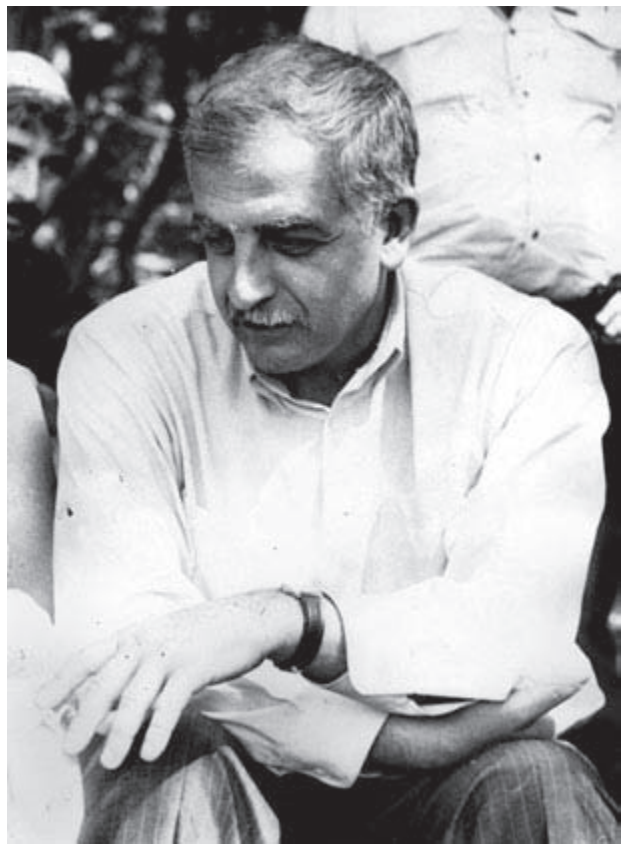
It was Ardzinba's turn to be underhand. In July, when most Georgian troops had left, the Abkhaz besieged Sukhumi and purged Kartvelian (largely Mingrelian) villages around the city. In villages like Kamani men, women and children were tortured and murdered in cold blood. Both sides committed atrocities, shooting and beheading even prisoners they had agreed to exchange. About 220,000, most of Abkhazia's Kartvelians, fled, some dying of cold and hunger in the mountain passes. Despite a third brush with death, Shevardnadze, likening himself to Christ, stayed in Sukhumi until 27 September, when he managed to fly out to Batumi and on to a demoralized Tbilisi. (Georgia had to join the CIS before Yeltsin would send an aircraft to rescue Shevardnadze from Sukhumi.) Some 15,000 men, women and children had perished over eighteen months. A million Georgians had left the country, mostly to work in Russia and Ukraine; a quarter of a million refugees from Abkhazia and Ossetia gravitated to Tbilisi.

The third stage of the Abkhaz–Georgian war began in mid-September, when Shevardnadze's forces were suppressing the Zviadists in Mingrelia. The Abkhaz downed two aircraft carrying refugees, and recaptured the ruins of Sukhumi. Russian warships blockaded the Black Sea to Georgian forces. After the ceasefire of 1 December 1993, the only part of Abkhazia in Georgian hands was the Svan-populated upper Kodori valley. (Through every conflict, Abkhaz and Georgians have quietly collaborated, generating electricity from the Inguri Hydroelectric Station, whose waters are in Georgia, but turbines in Abkhazia.)

The Mingrelian uprising was spurred when Zviad emerged from Chechnya on 24 September 1993, establishing his 'capital' in Zugdidi: he demanded Mingrelian independence, using discarded Georgian weaponry to take Poti and advance eastwards, a progress so alarming that Russia gave Shevardnadze's government 2,000 troops, artillery and ammunition. Shevardnadze delayed disbanding Ioseliani's Mkhedrioni: he now loosed them on the Mingrelians. Zugdidi fell on 6 November. On 1 January 1994 Zviad Gamsakhurdia, it was announced, committed suicide at Jikhashkari, near Zugdidi: the report, approved by Georgia's parliament on 24 February 2011, proves that he was shot in the back of the neck, possibly by Russian *Vympel* special forces working on Shevardnadze's instructions.

By capitulating to Yeltsin Georgia re-entered Russia's orbit.[7] On 3 February 1994 Yeltsin flew into Tbilisi, offering commercial, military and

Eduard Shevardnadze with his wife Nanuli meet Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko at Tbilisi airport in 1984.



Zviad Gamsak - hurdia, Georgia's first post-Soviet president, elected 1991.

political help, as well as the removal of nuclear and chemical stockpiles. Russia was in 1994 alarmed by its own breakaway Caucasian republics (especially Chechnya) and understood Shevardnadze's desire to reintegrate Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In May 1994 a ceasefire was agreed in Moscow: demilitarized zones separated the breakaway states from Georgia, policed by 2,500 CIS men (mainly Russians) and 136 UN monitors.

For a year, however, Shevardnadze had been conducting a double game and calling in debts owed to him, as the USSR's last foreign minister, by the USA and reunited Germany. The new US president, Bill Clinton, maintained George Bush's and James Baker's benevolence, though still refusing to intervene in the Abkhaz and South Ossetian conflicts, other than to blame the separatists' intransigence on Russia. Trust between Americans and Georgians was founded on the coincidence that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of the American armed forces was John Shalikashvili, son of a Georgian colonel of the Georgian army in 1918–21. Russia, however, used violence to warn Georgia off any pro-western course. On the evening of 7 August 1993 Fred Woodruff, a CIA agent (accompanied by Shevardnadze's head bodyguard), was killed by a shot to the back of his neck. Georgian agencies hastily arrested Anzor Sharmaidze, a soldier standing at the roadside at the time, beat a confession out of him and sentenced him to fifteen years in prison. (The FBI and the Woodruff family's lawyer soon established that Sharmaidze was not the murderer, but the fall guy served his full sentence and his conviction still stands. A week before his death Woodruff was visited by the notorious Aldrich Ames, even then suspected of being a Russian spy.[8])

Europe offered cautious support, as it had for the 1918–21 Georgian republic: Germany's Helmut Kohl offered money for reconstruction, the British offered NGOs for mine-clearing, the French revived the brandy and tobacco industries. Salvation came from Turkey, which bought Georgia's scrap metal and let Georgians hold car-boot sales along the Black Sea coast from Sarp to Trabzon. Instability and violence in Tbilisi deterred friendly powers from substantial commitment.

Shevardnadze's pro-Russian U-turn brought 200,000 protesters onto the streets in summer 1994. Demonstrations turned violent: many Mkhedrioni refused to join the regular army; Shevardnadze called on Russian help to clear the forests of Mingrelia of rebels. General Qarqarashvili, 'hero' of the Abkhaz conflict and defence minister, was injured by a bomb; he fled to Moscow (in an aircraft carrying an unexploded bomb) and joined the Military Academy. Several ministers and criminal godfathers were killed by bombs or machine guns in Tbilisi, events that culminated on 3 December in the murder of Gia Chanturia, the last popular opposition figure, as he was about to address a public meeting. (His widow, Irina Sarishvili, survived her injuries and opposed Shevardnadze in

parliament so vigorously that she forced the cabinet to resign.) In January 1995 more military leaders were gunned down. It is impossible to say who commissioned which murders: Russian or Georgian security services, mafia, separatists. Bombs struck power stations; militiamen murdered and raped. Criminals were set free. Shevardnadze fought back. He arrested Kitovani, who had a hare-brained scheme to reinvade Abkhazia. Later, he detained Ioseliani and outlawed his militia. Now Shevardnadze controlled all armed forces in Georgia; General Grachev, the butcher of Chechnya, tried to inveigle him into a joint war on the Chechens and the remaining rebels in Georgia. Shevardnadze compromised in September 1995: he gave Russia's prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin the use of Georgian army bases for 25 years.

Despite Baker's and Bush's gratitude, Shevardnadze had disillusioned western observers and donors. He had revived the 1921 Constitution which banned the death penalty, but executed six men in May 1994, another in August and at least seven in 1995, all after confessions extracted by torture (at the end of 1996 Georgia, under international pressure, suspended the death penalty). Georgia's population in 1995 was little better off than its starving, TB-ridden prison inmates. Georgia's income came from a million expatriates' earnings (despite Russia's imposition of a visa regime) and from selling derelict factories as scrap metal to Turkey. When the government put up new trolley-bus wires in Tbilisi, the copper wire was stolen and sold for scrap.

The year 1995 was independent Georgia's nadir. After a last assassination attempt by car bomb on 29 August (after which Igor Giorgadze, minister for security, fled to Russia), Shevardnadze adopted a pro-western policy: all his opponents were dead, in gaol or in Russia. The September 1995 constitution discarded the 1921 democracy, adopting a strong presidency and a submissive parliament. New young ministers promised much: Zurab Zhvania, a half-Armenian, partly Jewish 'green', energetic and rational, headed Shevardnadze's all-dominant Union of Georgian Citizens, while Nino Burjanadze, whose talents lay in self-presentation, brought into government her father's wealth (from grain importation) and her connections with the old Soviet establishment.

Winning 74 per cent of the votes in November 1995 required little manipulation by Shevardnadze's team. Zhvania became parliamentary speaker, Burjanadze supervised scrutiny of laws in a soft, stable dictatorship. Financial manipulation, rather than guns, now controlled the country. A new currency, the lari, modelled on the new Baltic currencies, held its value. But there was no mechanism for collecting taxes, and no inclination to pay them. The government was financed medievally, by selling posts: an ambassador's post cost $100,000, a district governor's $50,000, a traffic policeman's $5,000; successful bidders recouped their invest-

ment by property deals, trafficking, releasing offenders, extorting fines, etc. Electricity and gas supplies were intermittent in the cities, non-existent elsewhere: there was no money to repair hydroelectric stations or pay for Russian gas. Shevardnadze imported half a million meters, but, rather than pay for utilities, people preferred to bribe meter readers. Armed men would descend on a substation to have electricity supplied for a mafia banquet.

Corruption was fabulous. Millions of donors' dollars went into officials' bank accounts, instead of purchasing fuel oil or flour. Shevardnadze's family set an example: Eduard's nephew Nugzar ran a casino, taking 10 per cent of all laundered money. 'Businessmen' indistinguishable from 'thieves-in-the-law' acquired monopolies and real estate. Police would kidnap businessmen on the road from the airport and resell them to Chechens in the Pankisi gorge.

Nevertheless, Europe and the USA responded generously: Georgia received more aid per capita than any country in the world. The International Monetary Fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development lent hundreds of millions of dollars: some projects, such as the reconstruction of the port of Poti and the Baku to Supsa pipeline, were successful, as, eventually, was the gigantic Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil line. The dream of reviving the ancient Silk Road, with Georgia as a major transit country for goods and energy from China to Europe, remained a means of extracting sums of money for roads that were never built. Nevertheless, people saw enough improvement to acclaim Shevardnadze: armed men no longer roamed the streets; the lights stayed on longer. There was less unemployment, although many jobs came from servicing foreign NGOs as interpreters, drivers and hoteliers.

A token anti-corruption drive had to be made to maintain foreign support. Parliament began to accuse ministers of profiteering from petrol or grain monopolies. The government's response was to sue for slander, or declare meaningless crusades. The government abolished some laws (such as residence registration) which had enriched corrupt officials. Although taxes were still uncollected, Georgia's standing with its donors improved. At Zurab Zhvania's instigation, new laws enabled foreign NGOs to operate; their influence and money benefited the judiciary, the ecology, education, health and human rights. NGOs often met proud intransigence: Shevardnadze's wife vetoed the adoption abroad of orphans, declaring it was better to die in the homeland. Meanwhile Shevardnadze promoted the Christianity he had once persecuted by securing millions of dollars from oligarchs to build a new Trinity cathedral in Tbilisi. Despite collaborating with Shevardnadze in inviting Pope John Paul II to Georgia in 1999, Ilia II led the Georgian Orthodox Church into the same obscurantism as Russian Orthodoxy: he opposed ecumenism with Catholics or Protestants. Baptists

and Jehovah's Witnesses were attacked by mobs led by priests. Foreign proselyters had the advantage, for they offered not just salvation, but flour and cooking oil to villages they had converted.

In early February 1997 Shevardnadze visited President Chirac in France and NATO made an offer of eventual membership to Georgia. (The Russian Duma's defence committee sent General Rokhlin to persuade Tbilisi's parliamentarians that Russian military presence was preferable.) Shevardnadze cunningly manoeuvred: he and a friend from old times, Geidar Aliev, the dictator of Azerbaijan, set up by the end of 1997 GUAM – an alliance of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldavia, which Uzbekistan briefly joined. As in 1918–20, the bitter enmity of Azerbaijan and Armenia precluded the united Transcaucasia that Europe wanted, but GUAM did attract western support.

The year 1998 saw the last sparks of civil war: a rocket attack on Shevardnadze's armoured Mercedes on 9 February killed two security men, only wounding the target. In May the last Forest Brothers and White Legion guerrillas attacked the Mingrelian-populated Gali region of Abkhazia. In October a mutinous Zviadist colonel was repelled before he reached Kutaisi by General Tevzadze, who then became minister of defence. Aslan Abashidze then made Ajaria his fiefdom, appropriating Batumi's customs dues, while the Russian army in Akhalkalaki effectively governed Javakheti's Armenians. But Georgia was more stable than at any time since the collapse of the USSR, especially since the 1998 default disabled Russia economically and politically. Russia agreed to negotiations and in April 1999 evacuated two military bases, at Vaziani near Tbilisi, and at Gudauta near Sukhumi, and handed Georgia a paltry share of the Soviet Black Sea fleet. Shevardnadze was emboldened by these concessions to be openly pro-western. Western secret services retrieved the Soviet military nuclear stockpile in Georgia, and the Clinton government discussed a timetable for joining NATO. Georgian army units received American training and equipment.

Georgia made diplomatic moves. It was linked with Israel partly by a delusional dream that Georgia, too, a nation of university graduates, farmers and soldiers, surrounded by hostile states, could become prosperous and feared, and partly by Georgia's 2,000-year record of Judophilia and a community of Georgian Jews with dual nationality. Israeli weaponry and businessmen appeared in Tbilisi. Georgia also maintained excellent relations with Iran, again on a historic basis, and thanks to a bilingual community, 20,000 Georgian speakers, descendants of those enslaved by Shah Abbas in the 1620s, living around Fereidan. Georgia became a conduit for Iranian–western communication, and Iran supplied energy whenever Russia cut off supplies.

Turkey's and Armenia's disagreement whether the Armenians slaughtered in 1915 were holocaust victims, or collateral casualties, closed their

frontier in 1993: Turkey's only access to Azerbaijan and the Caspian was via Georgia. In 1999, after ecologists were placated or overruled, the Baku–Ceyhan pipeline went ahead, giving Europe access to Caspian energy independently of Russia. Instead of reopening the line from Kars via Armenia to Tbilisi, a new railway through Akhalkalaki, bypassing Armenia, was planned. Georgia anticipated easy income from transit by pipeline and rail of Azeri fossil fuels. The state now had revenues and, while agriculture and industry were still derelict, some normality returned to civic and commercial life. Parliamentary elections were held in 1999. But fraud was too blatant to hoodwink even foreign observers; most parliamentarians stood for their own enrichment and immunity from prosecution. The 2000 presidential elections, when Shevardnadze faced only his own communist stooge Jumber Patiashvili, were preposterous: the actual turnout was less than the required 50 per cent, but Shevardnadze claimed nearly 80 per cent of a reported 76 per cent turnout.

What nobody foresaw was the iron resolve of Vladimir Putin, the KGB obscurity who replaced the drunken Boris Yeltsin. In October 1999 Putin staged provocations to justify a new, devastating war with Chechnya, and then accused Georgia of letting Chechens regroup with their ethnic compatriots in the Pankisi gorge. In fact, the Georgians treated the Pankisi gorge as a no-go area, but Putin forced the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to help the Georgians police their frontier with Chechnya and Dagestan. He then punished Georgia by imposing a visa regime in December 2000 and by breaching neutrality in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, issuing Russian passports to residents, allowing free movement of goods and persons across the frontier with Russia, supporting attacks on Georgian and Mingrelian villages and even on UN monitors. Gas and petrol supplies from Russia became erratic.

Nevertheless, Shevardnadze felt he could release his worst enemies, first Tengiz Kitovani, then Ioseliani from prison. (Ioseliani wrote whenever he was in prison: his memoirs, *Three Dimensions,* admit the interpene - tration of criminal, academic and political spheres in Georgia.) However, Shevardnadze's downfall was now planned: Zurab Zhvania invited back from the USA a polyglot law graduate, Mikheil Saakashvili, who put a western veneer over his elite Soviet education in Kiev. Saakashvili became minister of justice, and garnered the support of NGOs in his fight for transparency and integrity. By November 2000, in a struggle between young radicals and the old guard, Shevardnadze had fired all his ministers, but rehired most. In September 2001 Shevardnadze resigned from his own party, which then crumbled. Saakashvili's close adviser, Giga Bokeria, had studied anti-Milošević tactics in Serbia. The NGO Liberty Institute imitated the Serbian Otpor, forming a student organization called Kmara! ('Enough!') to engineer a bloodless revolution.

When al-Qaida struck on 11 September 2001 Putin reminded President Bush that the Pankisi gorge harboured international terrorists. Any rapprochement between America and Russia threatened Shevardnadze: he flew to Washington in October to offer help in wars of 'Enduring Freedom'. Shevardnadze's mission was sabotaged by Kakha Targamadze, minister of the interior and a former KGB officer, and Vakhtang Kutateladze, minister of security. They decided to kill two birds with one stone, and drove lorry-loads of Chechen guerrillas from the Pankisi gorge across the mountains to the upper Kodori valley, from where they launched an attack on Abkhazia. (The Chechens now happily attacked the Abkhaz as allies of the Russians. Abkhazia was weakened by President Ardzinba's motor-neurone illness: of the initial triumvirate, Iuri Voronov was murdered in September 1995, perhaps by Georgian agents, while Stanislav Lakoba became a Moscow academic.)

Not only Putin, but also the hard men running Abkhazia were infuriated: there was general mobilization in Abkhazia, and a UN helicopter was shot down on 8 October. Russian aircraft bombed the upper Kodori valley. Putin refused to negotiate, and Targamadze's Chechens were bombed out of the valley. In November Russia bombed the Pankisi gorge, and *spetsnaz* troops were spotted in Georgia. President George W. Bush, fearing for the new pipeline, now intervened, offering to treble the Georgian defence budget, thus promoting Georgia to the country receiving the fourth-most US military assistance. But by August 2002 the Georgians were forced to clear, as gently as they could, the Pankisi gorge of Chechen refugees, and to agree (in principle) to reopen the railway from Sukhumi to Georgia, if only as a lifeline for Russia's ally, Armenia.

Characteristically, Putin, who thought the collapse of the USSR to be the twentieth century's greatest disaster, never forgave Shevardnadze's treachery, not even when the latter came to St Petersburg to celebrate the city's 300th anniversary in June 2003. All winter and spring 2003, gas, electricity and oil lines to Georgia were cut, sometimes by explosions. Military tensions escalated, Shevardnadze's invitations to NATO were countered by Russian offers of S-300 missiles to the Abkhaz.

Shevardnadze was now 75. Although he reacted with occasional ferocity, he was inclined to answer demands for reform and modernization with a shrug and the remark: 'What can we do? We're a failed state.' Corruption and intrigues thickened: the American AES company, which had tried since 1998 to rationalize electricity supply in Georgia, gave up in 2003; revenue from oil imports went to the minister of defence, General Tevzadze. On 25 February 2002 Nugzar Sajaia, head of Shevardnadze's security, suspected of commissioning Gamsakhurdia's killing, shot himself in his office. For different reasons, Russia and America agreed that Shevardnadze had to go. Georgia's modest economic and democratic

progress was faltering. The elections of November 2003, with the help of IT specialists, were absurdly fraudulent: many denizens of Tbilisi's cemeteries voted for Shevardnadze's reconstituted party 'For a New Georgia'. Saakashvili's new National Movement, NGOs and professional observers had plausible figures for the results, reversing Shevardnadze's victory. The public mood matched the views of the superpowers.

The 'Rose Revolution' coup mounted on 23 November 2003 by Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze is often credited to America, through the ambassador Richard Miles and NGOs, such as *Transparency*, after James Baker's visit to Tbilisi in July had failed to persuade Shevardnadze to reform. In fact, the Americans were lukewarm to Georgia's 'Young Turks': the green light came from Russia. Saakashvili's uncle Temur Asatiani shared business interests with the Kremlin, and in autumn 2003 Putin's unsavoury envoy, Grigori Luchansky, flew to Tbilisi, Batumi and Erevan, meeting all the main actors. Only the flight plans of Luchansky's aircraft are traceable, but they show that Putin was prepared to make concessions to get rid of Shevardnadze and make Georgia tractable. Doubtless, the Kremlin shared James Baker's scepticism about Saakashvili, but it welcomed pliable inexperienced leaders.

The 'Rose Revolution' was a *coup de théâtre*: after a triumphant motorcade from Mingrelia to Tbilisi, and declarations of neutrality from the armed forces, a crowd stormed the newly 'elected' parliament, which Ilia II had just blessed. The climax came when at the rostrum Saakashvili lifted to his lips a cup of tea left half drunk by Shevardnadze, who was deafened by the booing. Secretly relieved, promised immunity for his family, Shevardnadze retired to his residence, while Saakashvili, Zhvania and Burjanadze played like a rock band to their audience.[9] Roses, meant to neutralize the clenched-fist symbol of Kmara, were distributed to the crowd.

Russia showed immediate support: the foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, whose mother is Georgian, came to Tbilisi and spoke in Georgian, the first Russian powerbroker to do so. Then Colin Powell telephoned from the USA, and, independently, George Soros promised funding. New elections were held on 4 January 2004; the 96 per cent vote for Saakashvili was conceivably genuine. Saakashvili with typical hubris took his oath at Gelati monastery and announced that he would emulate King Davit the Builder. While he could not claim the military genius, profound intellect or favourable political climate enjoyed by the medieval king, Saakashvili dared, like Davit, to internationalize his cabinet. Most of Saakashvili's ministers were young, and recently interns or postgraduates at law firms in the USA or Europe. Saakashvili married a Dutchwoman, and passed a new law allowing dual nationality and thus the appointment of foreigners as ministers. The Russian-Georgian oligarch Kakha Bendukidze brought neo-con economics to Georgia. After ingratiating himself with President Chirac,

Saakashvili appointed the French ambassador to Georgia, Salomé Zourabichvili, as his foreign minister.[10] Bendukidze's privatization encouraged foreign bankers and the EU to advance money to pay pensions and government salaries in full and on time, for the first time in fifteen years. Salomé Zourabichvili's professionalism persuaded the Kremlin to honour its promises with alacrity. In March 2004 Putin stopped General Netkachev, commander of Russian troops in Batumi, from protecting Aslan Abashidze in Ajaria: Abashidze blew up the bridges and railway tracks connecting Ajaria to the rest of Georgia, but, disliked by his populace, in May fled his palace for asylum first on the Russian base at Batumi and then with his friend Luzhkov, mayor of Moscow. (Abashidze, as Luzhkov's friend, could expect no favours from Putin.) The evacuation of other Russian troops in Georgia was agreed; Putin even extradited Abashidze's ally, General Roman Dumbadze, to Tbilisi. Zourabichvili and Zhvania understood that Russia would eventually allow Georgia to reincorporate South Ossetia – an enlarged united Ossetia would only upset the north Caucasus, particularly the Ingush – if Georgia refrained from force, but that Russia would not relinquish separatist Abkhazia.

With Saakashvili on stage, Burjanadze front of house, and Zhvania backstage, the show went on. Traffic police were sacked: instead of burly Ossetians in Ladas, polite young girls in Volkswagens monitored traffic. At a stroke, police bribery stopped. Criminal and security police, customs and some civil servants were also purged, fewer employees receiving higher salaries. Spectacular 'stings' against corrupt officials were shown live on TV. Vano Merabishvili introduced a law by which just being a 'thief-in-the-law' was illegal. (The code of 'thieves-in-the-law' requires them to admit their status, enabling Merabishvili to claim that Georgia's main export to Russia was of criminal godfathers.) Electricity stations were repaired and bills were paid: the lights stayed on and rubbish was collected, at least in Tbilisi.

On 26 January 2004, in a ceremony held at the Kashueti church of St George in Tbilisi, Saakashvili officially rehabilitated Gamsakhurdia to 'put an end to disunity in our society'. He praised Gamsakhurdia as a 'great statesman and patriot' and decreed that his body be reburied in the Georgian capital, declaring that 'abandoning the Georgian president's grave in a war zone . . . is disrespectful of one's own self and one's own nation'. He also renamed a Tbilisi street after Gamsakhurdia and released Zviadists imprisoned by Shevardnadze in 1993–4.

At first Saakashvili maintained cordial relations with the Kremlin, promising to open the railway from Abkhazia to Armenia. He tried to seduce Eduard Kokoity into friendly semi-autonomy, with promises of development, but Kokoity, his power threatened by intransigent Ossetians, refused. In July Ossetian militia kidnapped 50 Georgian police who were circulating on

Ossetian territory. Saakashvili's angry response, demanding a reduction of Russian 'peace-keeping' in South Ossetia, breached the new Russo-Georgian accord. The breach widened when Saakashvili announced his desire to join NATO regardless of Russia's opposition: he refused to 'Finlandize' (that is, neutralize) Georgia. On 18 August 2004 two weeks of hostilities broke out in Ossetia: diplomats persuaded Saakashvili to withdraw, but Putin was now unforgiving. Worse, Abkhazia's new leader, Bagapsh, broke off talks. Saakashvili's outspoken support for the Orange revolution in the Ukraine in December 2004 made him, for Putin, an enemy.

Confrontation with Russia and separatists made Saakashvili popular. But his dictatorial behaviour ended the honeymoon. On 3 February 2005 it was announced that Zurab Zhvania had died of carbon monoxide poisoning, in a rented flat, where he was alone, playing backgammon with a young Azeri governor, Rafael Yusupov (also found dead). His bodyguard gave contradictory evidence, photographs of the scene varied with each edition of the newspapers, the bodies were hastily buried, forensic scientists and journalists were badly beaten or died mysteriously. FBI experts inspected the suspect gas heater: the English report found too little carbon monoxide (the Georgian version found more than enough) to cause death. Many surmised another version of Zhvania's demise: accidental death after a quarrel at the presidential palace over South Ossetia, followed by the young Azeri's murder, the installation of an Iranian stove, and a clumsy campaign to make the scene look like a homosexual tryst.[11] The KGB left intact in Tbilisi toxicological supplies to simulate cardiac attacks or carbon monoxide poisoning. Almost every dismissed Georgian politician has hinted that Zhvania was murdered.

Saakashvili worked more closely with a coterie of advisers than with his official team: other ministers were hired and fired too quickly to master their briefs. The only minister to keep his post from the start has been Vano Merabishvili who, as minister of the interior and of state security, controls police and paramilitary forces, using an increasingly large share of the Georgian budget. (It was Merabishvili who within few hours of the discovery of Zhvania's body diagnosed carbon monoxide poisoning, and hinted that a homosexual encounter with a Muslim made it wise to close the incident.) Giorgi Baramidze, a friend of the Zhvanias until Zurab's death, likewise remained, in various guises, close to Saakashvili. But Salomé Zourabichvili was forced out of office on 19 October 2005, after she protested at the president's undermining of her diplomatic efforts and parliament's interference in ambassadorial appointments. Outsiders had largely decorative roles in the Georgian government.

Kakha Bendukidze lasted longer, until February 2009: Georgia's economy depended on his energy and slogan 'Everything is for sale except our honour'. The haste to capitalize was such that nobody cared if Ben-

dukidze sold state assets too cheaply, and to companies whose directors interested Interpol. Saakashvili and Bendukidze made Georgia 'business-friendly' by cutting bureaucracy. Turkish companies now run three border crossings, and the two international airports at Batumi and Tbilisi. But even Kakha Bendukidze eventually left the fray, to be rector of an economics university.

Other reforms were unpopular, despite their logic. The Soros director Aleksandre Lomaia served as minister of education until 2007: he ended university entrance by bribery of underpaid lecturers by parents of lazy students, and enforced a single entrance examination; he aligned Georgian qualifications with Bologna standards, forcing professors to resign until they obtained credible doctorates. The outcry forced his resignation, but his heritage is the flourishing university sector.

Saakashvili's greatest defect is prizing appearance over reality. The countryside is deserted and agriculture ruined. Vestigial heavy industry depends on Russian and Kazakh capital, but visitors who stick to well-trodden paths see fine, asphalted boulevards and flyovers, new five-star hotels and medieval towns restored as tourist parks. Fine restaurants with expensive cars parked outside, elaborate fountains and tasteless statuary distract from crumbling housing stock and roads impassable for want of maintenance. The government's indifference to culture may not matter: middle-class prosperity enables publishers to publish books and readers to buy them, Georgian cinema and theatre hope to revive. But there is no interest in what can be hidden: a justice system where police beatings are routine, acquittals are impossible, and long prison sentences – often for offences like collecting firewood – bring death from TB. Georgia has one of the highest proportion of prisoners in the world. The poor have little access to medical treatment, and in a society where traditional family solidarity is breaking down, pensioners face malnutrition and freezing cold.

Few foreign advisers were competent or brave enough to criticize. Some, like the American Matthew Bryza, became unpaid lobbyists (there were in Brussels and Washington well-paid professional lobbyists), and persuaded American politicians, notably John McCain, to commit to Saakashvili. Lobbying overcame even Armenian pressure on the USA and Europe, and the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway project, bypassing Armenia to give Azerbaijan direct access to Turkey, went ahead. Saakashvili's dream of catching a train in Tbilisi and stepping off at London seemed feasible.

In May 2005 Salomé Zourabichvili secured Russia's commitment to evacuate its troops (for compensation of $250 million from the USA). But Russia undertook punitive actions, refusing visas and banning the import of Georgian wine and mineral water. (The effect was limited: Georgians still reached Moscow without visas, flying to Minsk in Belarus and then taking a train to Moscow; wine-makers were motivated to improve quality and sell

Saakashvili with his wife Sandra Roelofs and elder son Eduard on the island of Texel in 2005.

at higher prices to western markets; Georgia had a pretext to block Russia's membership of the World Trade Organization.) Russia also announced that 80 per cent of Abkhaz and South Ossetians now held Russian passports and would therefore be defended by Russia against Georgian aggression. Intimidatory army and navy exercises in the Caucasus and Black Sea began. On 27 September 2006 the Georgian government escalated tension by publicly expelling four Russian spies. All links and frontier crossings between Georgia and Russia were then closed; gas supplies were cut, or doubled in price. Saakashvili's foreign allies were divided between Europeans who urged moderation and Americans who proposed accelerating Georgia's entry into NATO. Western powers were reluctant to condemn Saakashvili, even after autumn 2007, when on the independent television channel Imedi the minister of defence, Irakli Okruashvili, accused him of procuring the assassination of the oligarch Badri Patarkatsishvili (a death foretold, for on 12 February 2008 Patarkatsishvili died in Leatherhead, Surrey, a death that the coroner decided was natural). Okruashvili was arrested, forced to retract and released on extortionate bail. On 7 November 2007 a crowd of protesters was violently dispersed. A state of emergency was declared; Imedi TV was first raided, then taken over by friends of the president.

Victory in local (September 2006) and presidential (January 2008) elections, which few foreign observers felt competent to criticize, gave Saakashvili a mandate to pursue his aggressive stance. The opposition, split between disillusioned former ministers, businessmen wanting trade with Russia and a scattering of idealists, could not field a candidate capable of uniting public opinion, or even of formulating an alternative policy.

Worse, even after Saakashvili's victory, there was no voice to be heard in parliament or the media that might illuminate what the disillusioned called 'Saakashvili's night government'.

Catastrophe ensued in August 2008. By now, thanks to tax collection, the defence budget reached nearly a billion U.S. dollars, and the government had bought weapons, from anti-aircraft missiles to naval corvettes, from Israel and eastern Europe, since western Europe and the USA gave only training and hand weapons. But Georgia lacked aircraft, and its miscellaneous weaponry was often incompatible. Forces gathered on the borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In spring Saakashvili boasted of taking control of the upper Kodori valley, which the Abkhaz had left to its Svan inhabitants. Russia's and Georgia's bellicose rhetoric grew louder; western recognition of an independent Kosovo in February 2008 and NATO's proposals for Georgian membership in April at Bucharest infuriated Russia. The Kremlin planned to carve up or abolish Georgia; America's embroilment in Iraq and Afghanistan was opportune. The Russian army quickly repaired the Black Sea railway to Sukhumi and the Georgian border; the navy practised manoeuvres, and the army cancelled leave in the north Caucasus. Fifty Russian journalists descended on Tskhinvali.

Saakashvili judged autumn 2008 the time for military action: Putin was in Beijing at the Olympic Games; John McCain, the favoured candidate for the American presidency, could establish his credentials by backing Georgia and its newly equipped army. In fact, a trap was set and the prey ready to walk in. Ossetian militiamen wounded Georgian police, then killed three soldiers. Georgia opened fire on Ossetian positions. Condoleeza Rice and diplomats urged Saakashvili to step back, but 117 American military advisers neither stopped nor even reported the Georgian army's move towards Ossetia. (Perhaps some Americans were curious how the Georgians would fare, how heavily and effectively the Russians would respond.) Forewarned, the South Ossetians evacuated women and children to Russia. On 6 August Georgia opened artillery fire; the next day 16,000 men and 150 tanks moved, some deterring the Abkhaz, others invading Tskhinvali, where indiscriminate Soviet-made rockets caused serious civilian casualties. The Georgians failed to block the Roki tunnel; Russia easily brought troops in by road to protect its 'peacekeepers' and Ossetian 'citizens'. Chechen irregulars rushed to help the Ossetians (whom they normally detested) and to loot Georgian villages. Russian forces (360 tanks, 320 aircraft) came to sweep the Georgians away. Poor Russian communications and effective Georgian anti-aircraft fire delayed nemesis by a few days. Meanwhile the Russian navy, air force and army systematically destroyed Georgia's hard-earned military resources, from ports to tanks, and took the east–west railway and road, cutting the country in two. (They spared, however, infrastructure, such as electricity lines, and factories owned by

Russian commercial interests.) Twenty thousand Georgian villagers driven out of south Ossetia suffered rape, robbery and murder by irregulars; Ossetian villagers were brutally treated by Georgian combatants. Gori, lightly bombed, was taken by a drunken Russian colonel, who forced Georgian negotiators to drink toasts to Stalin. Tbilisi was menaced by low-flying aircraft, but not bombed. On 10 August Abkhaz, supported by Russians, crossed the Inguri river and occupied Zugdidi and Senaki, while an Abkhaz force swept the Georgians from the upper Kodori valley.

Saakashvili, on the verge of a nervous breakdown, his army routed, his navy and much of his air force destroyed, his capital in range of ordinary artillery, had 2,000 men flown back from service in Iraq. It took the efforts of Ban Ki-Moon of the UN, Javier Solana of NATO and Alexander Stubb of the OSCE to get a ceasefire. Georgia's foreign minister, Eka Tqeshelashvili, like most of Saakashvili's token women ministers, was out of her depth. Europe squabbled: Poland and the Baltic states blamed Russia; Italy and Germany sympathized with Moscow. But for Nicolas Sarkozy and his foreign minister Bernard Kouchner, flying to Moscow and then to Tbilisi, August 2008 might have ended like February 1921. Sarkozy's six points – renouncing force, ending hostilities, letting in humanitarian aid, withdrawing both armies to initial positions, putting Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the international agenda – were imprecise, but salutary. Saakashvili was saved from his own opposition by President Medvedev's loud insistence that he step down: opposing Saakashvili now made any Georgian politician a Russian stooge. But Saakashvili had to accept the Sarkozy terms: all he could do was belatedly withdraw from the CIS.

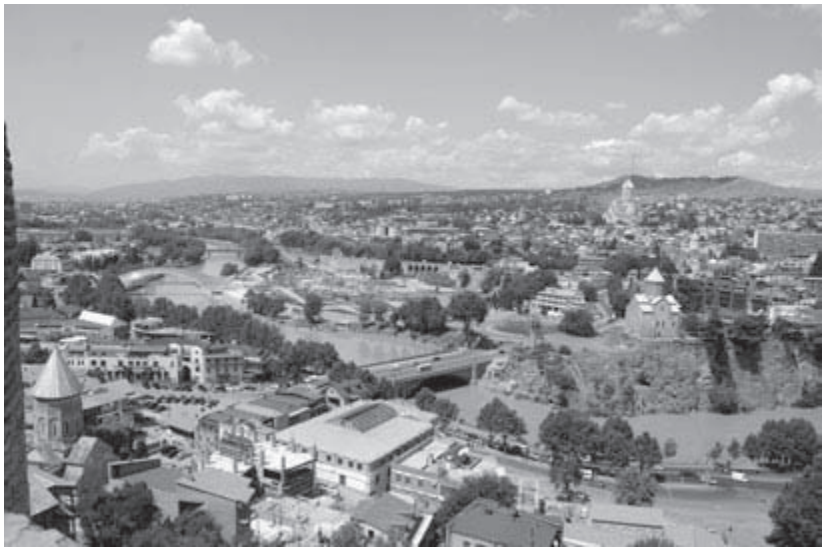
Argument followed about the borders of South Ossetia, which now included Georgian areas hitherto outside Kokoity's control. Akhalgori became Leningori again; its Georgian citizens had to pass Russian checkpoints. On 26 August Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent republics, and bought their recognition from Venezuela, Nauru, Nicaragua and, until 2011, Vanuatu. Russian business openly took over the economies of both countries. (Seeing their fate indissolubly linked to Russia, with no further negotiation in sight, not all Abkhaz were happy about the outcome; Russia, anxious about Ingush reactions, refused to let South Ossetia join the Russian federation and integrate with North Ossetia.) Europe privately reproached Georgia for its irresponsibility and tacitly closed NATO's doors. The world banking crisis was only beginning: the USA and EU paid Georgia nearly $2 billion to rebuild its bombed infrastructure. For some time, Georgia's sympathizers maintained the fiction that Saakashvili had only reacted to an unprovoked attack, but independent observers and, a year later, the Tagliavini report to the EU lay the blame on both sides.

Only someone as sanguine as Saakashvili would then celebrate victory: Tbilisi had not been bombed. But with Barack Obama's presidency, Georgia became insignificant to the USA. Turkey's 'zero-problem' foreign policy, maintaining good relations with mutually hostile states, was deemed better placed to regulate Transcaucasia. Meanwhile, conflict had frightened off investors: all work halted for two years on the Baku–Tbilisi –Kars railway.

Georgia sought new support. Israel stepped into the gap, but was alienated by the Georgian government's new policy, imitating Putin, of extracting money from foreign firms and businessmen by fines for obscure breaches of regulations and retrospective taxation. Iran, however, proved an unexpected source of income: rich Iranian tourists had few destinations where they could enter visa-free and let their hair down. Borrowing and spending, Georgia has over the last two years built roads to tourist destinations, such as the Vardzia rock-monastery complex near the Turkish–Armenian border, and Mestia in the Svan mountains.

Like the amputation of diseased limbs, the loss of Abkhazia and South Ossetia restored some health to the Georgian body politic. Now the first voices dare to suggest recognizing Abkhazia's independence, so at least to preserve some links. (The border is not completely closed; elderly farmers still run the gauntlets of paramilitaries to sell their hazelnuts in Mingrelia and get twice the price any Abkhaz middleman will pay; the Inguri power station produces more megawatts than ever, and distributes them fairly between Abkhazia and Georgia.) In 2010 Russian reopened the border crossing at Lars in the Daryal Pass, ostensibly for the benefit of transit to Armenia, but allowing other foreigners, and even Russians, road access to Tbilisi. Russia's ownership of much infrastructure precludes any damage (short of a complete takeover) to the country. Moreover, Georgian opposition politicians have been photographed shaking hands with Russian leaders in the Kremlin.

Saakashvili's rhetoric and propensity to violence remained undiminished.[12] In March 2010 he was complicit in a TV programme that simulated a Russian invasion of Tbilisi, and thus caused an exodus of cars to jam the roads. On 26 May 2011 demonstrators were attacked as brutally as in 2007, with perhaps ten beaten to death and four press photographers then arrested as 'Russian spies'. Georgia's crucial needs go unattended: today sees only a tiny fraction of the tea and citrus produced in the 1970s, while increased world food prices have not stimulated Georgian agriculture into feeding the country: with the destruction of Tbilisi's markets, a shop-bought tomato or lettuce now comes from Turkey. (Recent projects, such as crocodile farming, or importing white farmers from South Africa, seem unlikely to revive agriculture.) Demands for transparency have been ironically interpreted by Vano Merabishvili, who has built police stations with



Tbilisi today.

walls of glass where his employees can be seen from the street as they sit at their desks. The government-backed mayor of Tbilisi, Giorgi Ugulava, mends pipes, bakes bread and dispenses petrol, as if on a TV reality show. Journalists, however, are becoming more defiant: a public showing was given to a programme critically examining the death of Zurab Zhvania. The public is still politically unsophisticated, as the bestsellers of 2010 on the bookstalls (Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*) demonstrate. To judge by Lasha Bughadze's novel *The Last Bell*, Georgia's school-leavers are more anarchic and disobedient than their forebears: a less gullible generation may demand more than lying rhetoric from their politicians.

After the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2012–13 Georgia is due to adopt yet another constitution, this time parliamentary, though given the subservience of deputies to the ruling party, governance is unlikely to become more consensual, and the change may be designed to enable Saakashvili, like Putin, to remain in power with a new job title. The opposition, 'Georgian Dream', financed by the oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, lacks coherent programmes or serious support; Ivanishvili's many philanthropic projects (e.g. the restoration of Batumi's botanical gardens) may not overcome suspicions that 'Georgian Dream' enjoys the Kremlin's patronage. A new ideal, 'the Caucasian Singapore', has replaced the old 'New Israel' model; in both cases, essential incompatibilities are overlooked: Georgia lacks the Confucian culture, the ethnic mix and strategic geographical situation of Singapore. And that may be its saving.

References

✠

ABBREVIATIONS

Akty: A. Berzhe, ed., *Akty, sobrannye kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu komisseiu tt I–XII* (Tbilisi, 1888–1902).
APRF: Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi federatsii.
Gldani: Archives of Communist Party of Georgia at Gldani (*fond*, *opis'*, *karton*, pages).
nark'vevebi: *kartuli ist'oriis nark'vevebi tt I–V* (Tbilisi, 1971–80).
TNA, FO: The National Archives (Kew), Foreign Office.
SMOMPK: *Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnostei i plemion Kavkaza tt. 1–45* (Tbilisi, 1881–1915).
TSA FSB RF: *Tsentral'nyi arkhiv Federal'noi sluzhby bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi federatsii.*
TSGVIA: Central State All-Union Historical Archive.

1 The Emergence of the Kartvelians

1 G. A. Melikišvili, *K istorii drevneĭ Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1959), remains the standard introduction to the prehistory of the Georgians and to Anatolian and Greek sources.
2 G. A. Klimov, *Ètimologiceskiĭ slovar' kartvel'skix iazykov* (Moscow, 1964).
3 Jost Gippert, *Iranica Armeno–Iberica: Studien zu den iranischen Lehnwörtern im Armenischen und Georgischen* (Bamberg, 1993); Bidzina Pochkhua, *kartuli enis leksik'ologia* (Tbilisi, 1974), pp. 347–58.
4 Herodotus, *History I (Clio),* § 104.
5 Note the similar old Scandinavian term for Russia, *gardarikia*, 'realm of walled towns'.
6 I. M. D'iakonov and S. A. Starostin, 'Khurrito-urartskie i vostochno-kavkazskie iazyki', *Drevniĭ vostok. Ètnokul'turnye sviazi* (Moscow, 1988), pp. 164–207.
7 David Braun, *Georgia in Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 302–5.
8 Flavius Arrian, *Voyage Round the Euxine Sea*, trans. William Falconer and Thomas Falconer (Oxford, 1805), pp. 6–14; Pliny, *Natural History: Book XXIII,* trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley (London, 1898), vol. VI, pp. 93–4.
9 Herodotus, *The Histories*, ed. A. D. Godley (Cambridge, 1920), p. 79.

2 The Origins of the Kingdom of Kartli

1 A. Furtwängler, *Iberia and Rome* (Langenweissbach, 2001), p. 105.
2 Cyril Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, 1963); Toumanoff, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de la Caucasie chrétienne: Arménie–Géorgie–Albanie* (Rome, 1976); Stephen H. Rapp Jr, *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts* (Louvain, 2003). Two companion volumes to come, for a full discussion of the possible chronology and succession of Georgian kings. An alternative and sometimes more plausible chronology of Georgian rulers up to AD 1000, giving more weight to Byzantine and Armenian sources, is set out in Christian Se Hipani, *Continuité des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'èmpire du VIe au IXe siècle* (Paris, 2006), pp. 393–485, 538–46.
3 Strabo, *Geography*, trans. Horace Leonard Jones (London, 1927), Book XI, chap. 2, §18.
4 Konstantin Ts'ereteli, 'Armazian Script', in *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus*, ed. Tamila Mgaloblishvili (Richmond, 1998), pp. 155–62; Furtwängler, *Iberia and Rome*.
5 Strabo, *Geography*, Book XI, chap. 3, §3.
6 Tamila Mgaloblishvili and Iulon Gagoshidze 'The Jewish Diaspora and Early Christianity in Georgia', in *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus*, pp. 39–58; Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), p. 21.
7 Gocha Tsetskhladze, *Die Griechen in der Colchis* (Amsterdam, 1998), p. 173. Akes may be just a truncation of a longer Iranian name.
8 Pliny, *Natural History: Book XXIII,* trans. John Bostock and H. T. Riley (London, 1898), vol. VI, pp. 93–4.
9 Strabo, *Geography,* Book XI, chap. 3, §§1, 3, 6.
10 David Braund, 'King Flavius Dades', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik,* XCVI (1993), pp. 46–50.
11 Flavius Arrian, *Voyage Round the Euxine Sea*, trans. William Falconer and Thomas Falconer (Oxford, 1805), pp. 6–14.
12 Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, trans. Ernest Cary (Cambridge, MA, 1954–5), LXIX, §15.

3 Conversion

1 See Lambert M. Surhone et al., eds, *Tabula Peutingeriana* (Mauritius, 2010).
2 For example, see Zaza Aleksidze, 'New Recensions of *The Conversion of Georgia* and *13 Syrian Fathers* Recently Discovered on Mt Sinai', in *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia* (Spoleto, 1996), pp. 409–26.
3 Stephen H. Rapp Jr, 'Georgian Sources', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, CXXXII (2007), pp. 183–220.
4 See the NASA website (http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/solar.html) for historical mapping of solar eclipses.
5 Vakhtang Licheli, 'St Andrew in Samtskhe: Archaeological Proof?', in *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus*, ed. Tamila Mgaloblishvili (Richmond, 1998), pp. 25–37; for the interpolation, see R. W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 355–9.
6 Bernard Outtier, 'La christianisation du Caucase', in *Il Caucaso*, pp. 553–70.
7 For a list of primates of the Georgian Church, see Kalistrat Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation,* trans. Katharine Vivian (Paris, 1983), pp. 74–6; Stephen

H. Rapp Jr, *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts* (Louvain, 2003), p. 299.
8 Nodar Gabašvili, *La Georgia e Roma* (Vatican City, 2003), pp. 39–40.
9 Tamaz Gamqrelidze, *Alphabetic Writing and the Old Georgian Script* (Tbilisi, 1989 [in Georgian with Russian résumé].
10 Antonio Carile, 'Il Caucaso e l'Impero Bizantino (sec. VI–XI)', in *Il Caucaso*, pp. 9–84.
11 Kitty Machabeli, 'Early Medieval Stelae in Georgia', in *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus*, ed. Tamila Mgaloblishvili (Richmond, 1998), pp. 83–96.
12 Natela Vachnadze, ed., *sakartvelos ist'oria I* (Tbilisi, 2008), p. 134 [Shalva Amiranashvili describes seeing a gemma of a crowned profile in the British Museum]; Otar T'qeshelashvili, 'Tbilisshi aghmochenil gemma-sabech'davze gamosakhuli p'irovnebis vinaobistvis', *sabch'ota xelovneba,* V (Tbilisi, 1962), pp. 58–60.
13 Agathias Scholasticus, *Histories*, 3.9.10, 3.10.11.
14 E. A. Pakhomov, *Monety Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1970); David M. Lang, *Studies in the Numismatic History of Georgia in Transcaucasia* (New York, 1955).
15 Michel Tamarati, *L'Église géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 244–5 [with Catholic bias].
16 Jean-Pierre Mahé, 'La rupture arméno-géorgienne au début du VII s. et les réécritures historiographiques', in *Il Caucaso*, pp. 927–62.
17 Nicole Thierry, 'Iconographie sacrée et profane en Transcaucasie', in *Il Caucaso*, pp. 963–1014.

4 The Arab Conquest

1 Werner Seibt, 'Erfolge und Misserfolge des Islams in der Kaukasregion', in *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia* (Spoleto, 1996), pp. 571–610.
2 Michel van Esbroeck, 'Lazique, Mingrélie et Apkhazie IV–IX s', in *Il Caucaso*, pp. 195–223.
3 Cyril Toumanoff, 'The Bagratids of Iberia from the Eighth to the Eleventh Century', *Le Museon*, LXXIV (1961), pp. 5–42.
4 Michael Bibikov, 'Productivity and Social Organization in the Medieval Caucasus', in *Il Caucaso*, p. 363.
5 T. Papuashvili, *Ranta da kakhta samepo (VIII–XI s.)* (Tbilisi, 1982).
6 Wakhtang Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjeti and Shavsheti* (Stuttgart, 1992), pp. 9–18, 24–39.
7 Ibid., PP. 89–90.
8 Ibid., pp. 92–141.
9 SMOMPK, 29, pp. 1–73.
10 SMOMPK, 38, pp. 1–130.

5 Unification

1 See E. A. Pakhomov *Monety Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1970); David M. Lang, *Studies in the Numismatic History of Georgia in Transcaucasia* (New York, 1955), table CXXX.
2 S. S. Kakabadze, *Gruzinskie dokumenty v sobranii leningradskogo otdela Instituta Vostokovedenia* (Moscow, 1987), no. 5, pp. 16–32, 'Melkisedek's and Emperor Basil's grants to Mtskheta'.
3 Wakhtang Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjeti and Shavsheti* (Stuttgart, 1992), p. 95.

4 L. Garland and S. H. Rapp, 'Mary of Alania: Woman and Empress Between Two Worlds', in *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience*, ed. L. Garland (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 89–121.
5 For the argument, supported by many historians, that the Varangians fought on Bagrat's side, see Roin Met'reveli and Jaba Samushia, *mepet mepe giorgi II* (Tbilisi, 2003), pp. 20–21.
6 For the argument that the Borena who composed these lines was in fact a thirteenth-century Svan, see V. Silogava, 'borenas ts'arts'era-leksis garshemo', *lit'erat'uruli sakartvelo* (2 January 1999), p. 6.
7 'Akhalkalakskii uezd v arkheologicheskom otnoshenii', SMOMPK, 25, pp. 1–136.
8 Met'reveli and Jaba Samushia, *mepet mepe giorgi II*, pp. 42–3.
9 For proof of dating, see Met'reveli and Jaba Samushia, *mepet mepe giorgi II*, pp. 75–82. Partskhisi is usually dated to 1074.
10 Met'reveli and Jaba Samushia, *mepet mepe giorgi II*, p. 111.
11 For a more generous interpretation of Giorgi II's change of tactics, see Roin Met'reveli, *Saist'orio nark'vevebi* (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 202–3.

6 Davit the Builder

1 For the standard biography, see Roin Met'reveli, *Davit Aghmashenebeli* (Tbilisi, 1990); the English translation of Leont'i Mroveli, *The Life of Davit King of Kings*, in R. W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 309–53.
2 Roin Met'reveli, *Saist'orio nark'vevebi* (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 211–12; T. Zhordania, *Kronik'ebi I* [1892] (Tbilisi, 2004), p. 239.
3 Met'reveli, *Saist'orio nark'vevebi*, pp. 206–8; *Davit Aghmashenebeli*, pp. 82–6.
4 Met'reveli, *Saist'orio nark'vevebi*, pp. 208–9. The western frontier of Kakhetia was then the river Ksani.
5 Met'reveli, *Davit Aghmashenebeli,* pp. 121–4.
6 R. V. Metreveli, *Nekotorye voprosy vneshnei politiki Gruzii v srednie veka: XII v.* (Tbilisi, 1995), pp. 3–25.
7 Peter B. Golden, 'The Case of Pre-Chingisid Rus' and Georgia', in *Nomads in the Sedentary World,* ed. Anatoly Khazanov and André Wink (Richmond, 2001).
8 Robert de Lasteyrie, *Cartulaire générale de Paris* (Paris, 1887), p. 172; Z. Avalishvili, 'The Cross from Overseas', in *Georgica* (London, 1936), vol. II–III, pp. 3–11.
9 Geneviève Bautier, 'L'envoi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris en 1120', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* (1971), CXXIX, pp. 387–97.
10 D. Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia* (London, 2010), pp. 225–6.
11 M. Chantieva, *Istoriia checheno-ingushskoi pis'mennosti* (Grozny, 1958), p. 18.
12 Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Eclaircissements à l'histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité* (Paris, 1851), p. 243.
13 Leila Khubashvili, 'Davit Aghmashenebelis presk'is zogierti sak'itkhisatvis [Some Aspects of King Davit the Builder's Fresco]', in *Ist'oriani: sametsniero k'rebuli*, ed. Buba K'udava (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 181–93.
14 A. E. Krymskii, *Nizami i ego sovremenniki* (Baku, 1981), pp. 157–61.
15 M. Todua, *Kartul-sp'arsuli et'iudebi III* (Tbilisi, 1979), p. 33.
16 For an interpretation of Davit IV's guilt at forcibly taking power, see F. D. Zhordania, *Zaveshchanie Davida Obnovitelia* (Moscow, 1895); Met'reveli, *Saist'orio nark'vevebi,* pp. 213–14.
17 For a German version of the *Hymns of Repentance* with notes, see H. C. Günther, trans., *Davit Aghmashenebeli: Reuegesänge* (Würzburg, 2005).
18 Andro Gogoladze, ed., *Davit Aghmasheneblis anderdzi Shiomghvimsadme*

[Davit the Builder's Testament to Shio-Mghvime Monastery] (Tbilisi, 2000); V. Silogava, *Anderdzi Davit Aghmasheneblisa Shiomghvimisadmi* (Tbilisi, 2003).

7 Demetre and Giorgi III

1 Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Eclaircissements à l'histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité* (Paris, 1851), p. 247.
2 Ibid., p. 243.
3 Ibid., p. 255
4 For the Shirvani view of this campaign, as seen in Khaqani's poetry, see Samir Mamedov, 'Strategicheskaia operatsiia ob'edinennykh sil Shirvan-Gruzinskikh voisk . . .', in *Ist'oriani*, ed. Buba K'udava (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 211–18.
5 Tedo Zhordania, *Kronik'ebi I* [1892] (Tbilisi, 2004), p. 265.
6 Brosset, *Eclaircissements*, p. 257.

8 Queen Tamar

1 Mikheil Bakht'adze, 'qutlu-arslanis dasis gamosvlis shedegebis shesakheb', in *Ist'oriani*, ed. Buba K'udava (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 220–31.
2 Roin Met'reveli, *mepe tamari* (Tbilisi, 1991), pp. 129–55; Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (anti'k'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), p. 280. A Zorobabel is mentioned in Matthew 1:12.
3 D. L. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i Rossiia* (Moscow, 2003), Book 1, p. 45.
4 For a different opinion, see Met'reveli, *mepe tamari*, pp. 169–70.
5 For the first correct reading of this letter, see Mzekala Shanidze, 'ori sit'qva tamaris ist'orik'osta tkhzulebebis t'ekst'shi', in *Ist'oriani,* pp. 486–7.
6 H. W. Duda, *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bibi* (Copenhagen, 1959).
7 See N. Ia. Marr, *Ani, knizhnaia istoriia goroda i raskopki* (Moscow, 1934); for a French translation, see *Ani, rêve d'Arménie*, trans. Aïda Tchavktchian (Paris, 2001).
8 Cyril Toumanoff, 'On the Relationship between the Founders of the Empire of Trebizond and the Georgian Queen Thamar', *Speculum*, XV/3 (1940), pp. 299–312.
9 Stephen H. Rapp, Jr, 'The Coinage of T'amar', in *Le Muséon*, (1993) CVI/3–4, pp. 309–30.
10 Johannes Pahlitzsch, 'Georgians and Greeks in Jerusalem (1099–1310)', in *East and West in the Crusader States*, ed. Krijnie Ciggaar and Herman Teule (Leuven, 1996), p. 38; Vateishvili, *Gruziia i evropeiskie strany kn. 1*, pp. 135–40; Kalistrat Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation*, trans. Katharine Vivian (Paris, 1983), p. 172.
11 Marjory Wardrop, trans., *The Man in the Panther's Skin* [1912] (Richmond, 2001). This is still the best English translation.

9 Mongol Invasion

1 Katharine Vivian, trans., *The Georgian Chronicle: The Period of Giorgi Lasha* (Amsterdam, 1991). This is a translation of the 'hundred-year chronicler'.
2 Michel Tamarati, *L'église géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 414–30.
3 D. L. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i evropeiskie strany kn. 1* (Moscow, 2003), pp. 47–9.
4 See O. Houdas, trans., *Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti, Prince de Kharezm* [1895] (Paris, 1973).
5 Jaba Samushia, 'Bijnisis shekhvedra . . .', in *Ist'oriani*, ed. Buba K'udava (Tbilisi, 2009), pp. 232–49.

6 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *Kartvel ebraelta ist'oria: ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana* (Tbilisi, 1995), p. 83.

10 The Fractured State

1 Robert G. Bedrosian, *The Turco-Mongol Invasions and the Lords of Armenia in the 13–14th Centuries*, PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1979. Available online at <http://rbedrosian.com/dissert.html>.
2 For reconstruction from Georgian rendering of Ossetic names, see V. I. Abaev, *Istoriko-ètimologicheskii slovar' osetinskogo iazyka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1958); Georgian *Limon-chav* represents Ossetic *Lymæn-tsaw*, 'pleasant gait'.
3 Michel Tamarati, *L'église géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 436–7.
4 Ibid., pp. 438–40.
5 I. S. Dolidze, *kartuli samartlis dzeglebi tom. I* (Tbilisi, 1963), pp. 401–21 ('samartali mepis giorgisa'); for the best edition, albeit in French translation, of the *dzeglis dadeba,* see Georges Charachidzé, *Introduction à l'étude de la féodalité géorgienne: le Code de Georges le Brillant* (Paris, 1971).
6 Dolidze, *kartuli samartlis dzeglebi*, pp. 426–49. ('samartali Bekasi', 'Beka's law code').
7 For the text of *khelmts'ipebis k'aris garigeba* with Russian translation, notes, vocabulary etc., see I. Surguladze, *Kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* (Tbilisi, 1970), pp. 1–200.
8 For the names and dates of the nine other known *mts'ignobarukhut-sesich'qondideli* from 1104 up to the fourteenth century, see Roin Met'reveli, *Davit IV aghmashenebeli* (Tbilisi, 1990), p. 139.
9 For the order of bishops, see S. S. Kakabadze, *Gruzinskie dokumenty v sobranii leningradskogo otdela Instituta Vostokovedeniia* (Moscow, 1982), no. 19, pp. 81–6.

11 Timur Lang and the Destruction of Georgia

1 Abu Talib Husaini, *Mulfazat Timury* (Delhi, 2010); David Nicolle, *The Age of Tamerlane: Warfare in the Middle East* (London, 1990); Justin Marozzi, *Tamerlane* (London, 2004).
2 Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane* [1860] (London, 1958).
3 For a rosier view of Qara Yusuf, see S. Aliyarly, *Istoriia Azerbaijana* (Baku, 2008), pp. 289–92.
4 P. Ioseliani, 'Shota Rustaveli', *Kavkaz*, 13 (1870), pp. 2–4.
5 S. S. Kakabadze, *Gruzinskie dokumenty v sobranii Leningradskogo otd. Inst. vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* (Moscow, 1987), no. 44, pp. 177–84.
6 Ibid., no. 31, pp. 143–6.
7 For eyewitness and archival accounts, see D. L. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i evropeiskie strany* (Moscow, 2003), Book 1, pp. 184–7 and 215–19; for a Catholic-oriented account, see M. Tamarati, *L'eglise géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 453–60.
8 M. Rekhviashvili, *samtskhis samtavro XIII-XVI ss.* (Tbilisi, 1992), pp. 39–56.
9 M. Tamarashvili, *ist'oria k'atolik'obisa kartvelta shoris* (Tbilisi, 1902), pp. 56–64.
10 J. Barbaro and A. Contarini, trans. Charles Grey, *Travels to Tana and Persia* (London, 1873), pp. 90–92, 117–23, 138–43.

12 Fratricide

1 Ibrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevî* (*Historia*), trans. Fehim Nametak (Sarajevo, 2000), vol. I, p. 171.
2 Nametak, *A Narrative of Italian Travels in Persia*, trans. Charles Grey (London, 1873) vol. XLIX, p. 64.
3 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), p. 86.
4 Hasan-i Rumlu, *A Chronicle of the Early Safawis,* trans. S. N. Seddon (Baroda, 1931–4); For the Persian text with Georgian translation, see V. Puturidze, *hasan rumlus tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb* (Tbilisi, 1966).
5 Mikhail Svanidze, 'La France et la guerre entre l'empire ottoman et la Perse (1548–1555)', in *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe*, ed. Florence Hellot-Bellier and Irène Natchkebia (Paris, 2009), pp. 37–47.
6 Lajos Fekete, *Zur Geschichte der Grusiner des 16. Jahrhunderts* in *Acta orientalia* (Budapest, 1951), vol. I, pp. 93–133.
7 Svanidze, 'La France et la guerre', p. 45.
8 For the text of Tahmasp's *firman* to Adi-Kurkulu-bek of the Tsakhurs, see *Akty*, vol. II, p. 1085.
9 S. A. Belokurov, *Snosheniia Rossii s Kavkazom, 1578–1613* (Moscow, 1889), vol. IV, pp. xi–li.
10 Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, *History of the Warres between the Turkes and the Persians*, trans. A. Hartwell (London, 1595), p. 63.
11 Ibid., pp. 142–5.
12 Michel Tamarati, *L'église géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 468–70.
13 M. Rekhviashvili, *samtskhis samtavro. XIII–XVI ss.* (Tbilisi, 1992), pp. 86–93.
14 M. Polievktov, *Materialy po istorii gruzino-russkikh otnoshenii (1615–40) t. I* (Tbilisi, 1937), p. 144.
15 M. Svanidze, 'Une ambassadrice géorgienne (sur l'histoire du traité de paix turco-persan de 1612)', trans. G. Charachidzé, in *Revue des études géorgienne et caucasiennes*, no. 4 (1988), pp. 109–25.
16 W.E.D. Allen, ed., *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings, 1589–1605* (London, 1970), vol. II, pp. 454–68 ('Parricide in Zagem'); Ivane Javakhishvili, *kartveli eris ist'oria* (Tbilisi, 1953), vol. IV, chap. 2 ('urtiertoba rusetsa da sakartvelos shoris XVII sauk'uneshi'); Belokurov, *Snosheniia Rossii s Kavkazom*, pp. 420–516.

13 King Teimuraz I

1 Antonio de Gouvea, *Relaçam em que se trata das guerras* (Lisbon, 1611); French trans.: *Relation des grandes guerres*, trans. A de Meneses (Rouen, 1646).
2 Eskander Beg Monshi, *The History of Shah Abbas the Great* (Boulder, CO, 1978), vol. II, pp. 981–3; Monshi, *tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb* (Tbilisi, 1969), p. 73.
3 V. Puturidze, ed., *kartul-sp'arsuli ist'oriuli sabutebi* (Tbilisi, 1955), pp. 36–7.
4 Jean Chardin, *Voyage de Paris à Ispahan*, ed. Stefan Yerasimos (Paris, 1983), vol. I, pp. 274–5.
5 M. Polievktov, *Materialy po istorii gruzino-russkikh otnoshenii (1615–40) t. I* (Tbilisi, 1937), p. 41.
6 Z. Avalishvili, 'Teimuraz I and his Poem *The Martyrdom of Queen Ketevan*', *Georgica,* IV (1937), pp. 17–42.
7 Giuseppe-Maria Zampi, 'Relation de la Colchide et de la Mingrélie', in J. F. Bernard, *Recueil des voyages au nord* (Paris, 1715), vol. VII, pp. 198–302.

8 Arcangelo Lamberti, *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia . . .* (Naples, 1654), pp. 16–23.
9 D. M. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i evropeiskie strany kn. 1* (Moscow, 2003), pp. 245–56.
10 Stefano Paolini and Niceforo Irbachi, *Dittionario giorgiano e italiano* (Rome, 1629).
11 Sh. Lomsadze, *gviani shua sauk'uneebis sakartvelos ist'oriidan: akhaltsikhuri kronik'ebi* (Tbilisi, 1979), p. 78
12 'Akhalkalakskii uezd v arkheologicheskom otnoshenii', SMOMPK, 25 (1898), pp. 1–136.
13 V. Puturidze, 'mohamed taheris tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb', in *Masalebi sakartvelosa da k'avk'asiis ist'oriistvis* (Tbilisi, 1954), pp. 375–425.

14 Teimuraz Dispossessed

1 S. A. Belokurov, *Posol'stvo d'aka Fedota Elchina i sv. Pavla Zakhar'eva v Dadianskuiu zemliu* (Moscow, 1884).
2 S. S. Kakabadze, *Gruzinskie dokumenty Instituta Narodov Azii AN SSSR* (Moscow, 1967), section no. 52, p. 84.
3 Arcangelo Lamberti, *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia . . .* (Naples, 1654), pp. 187–8.
4 Jean Chardin, *Voyage de Paris à Ispahan vol. 1,* ed. Stefan Yerasimos (Paris, 1983), pp. 177–8.
5 M. Polievktov, ed., *Posol'stvo stol'nika Tolochanova i d'iaka Ievleva v Imeretiiu* (Moscow, 1926), pp. 27–192, 200–2.
6 Chardin, *Voyage*, pp. 295–7.
7 Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Perepiska na inostrannykh iazykakh gruzinskikh tarei s rossiiskimi gosudariami ot 1639 g. po 1770 g.* (St Petersburg, 1861), p. 100; Vakhushti, *sakartvelos tskhovreba* (Tbilisi, 1913), pp. 193–4, implies that Shah Suleiman was considering Erekle, Vakhtang or Archil as possible king of Kakhetia.
8 Michel Tamarati, *L'église géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 575–6.
9 For an account of the Afghan campaigns, see Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian Sea* (London, 1753), vol. II, pp. 106–392.
10 Mikheil Rekhviashvili, *imeretis samepo 1462–1810* (Tbilisi, 1989), p. 107.
11 Chardin, *Voyage*, p. 258.
12 Giuseppe-Maria Zampi, *Relation de la Colchide et de la Mingrélie*, in J. F. Bernard, *Recueil des voyages au nord* (Paris, 1715), vol. VII, p. 268.
13 Rekhviashvili, *imeretis samepo,* p. 135.
14 Edward Walewander, ed., *Polacy w Gruzji* (Lublin, 2002), pp. 72–3, 140–42; Andrzej Furier, *Polacy w Gruzji* (Warsaw, 2009), p. 101.

15 The Eighteenth Century

1 I. Surguladze, ed., *kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* (Tbilisi, 1970), pp. 211–26, 475–871; F.J.M. Feldbrugge, 'Medieval Law in Transcaucasia: On the Periphery of European Legal History', in *Law in Medieval Russia* (The Hague, 2009), pp. 293–314.
2 Paul de Villeneuve, *Mtzketh et Ibérie: notices sur la Géorgie* (Paris, 1875), p. 40.
3 D. M. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i evropeiskie strany,* vol. II, book 2: *Gruziia i zapadnaia Evropa XVII-XVIII vv* (Moscow, 1993), pp. 294–303, 365–413.
4 Donald Rayfield, 'Georgia', in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, ed. M. F. Suarez (Oxford, 2010), pp. 747–8.

5 Michel Tamarati, *L'eglise géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910), pp. 580–604.
6 Laurence Lockhart, 'La Perse et la France, documents nos. 75–77', in *The Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. VI (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 405–6; Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Notice sur un document géorgien,* extract from *B.H.A.S.,* XIV, pp. 129–42 (Paris, 1857).
7 Brosset, *Notice sur un document géorgien.*
8 Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Perepiska na inostrannykh iazykakh gruzinskikh tsarei s rossiiskimi gosudariami ot 1639 g. po 1770 g.* (St Petersburg, 1861), pp. 148–9.
9 S. Jikia and N. Shengelaia, eds, *1728 ts'lis tbilisis vilaetis didi davtari* (Tbilisi, 2009); Nodar Shengelaia, *sami osmaluri ts'qaro tbilisis ist'oriistvis 1730–1732* (Tbilisi, 2008), pp. 401–79.
10 Mikheil Rekhviashvili, *imeretis samepo 1462–1810* (Tbilisi, 1989), pp. 150–52.
11 Jonas Hanway, *An Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian Sea* (London, 1753), vol. II, p. 459.
12 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), p. 165.
13 D. M. Lang, *The Last Days of the Georgian Monarchy* (New York, 1957), pp. 72–3, 140–42.
14 P. G. Butkov, *Materialy dlia novoi istorii Kavkaza s 1722 po 1803 god* (St Petersburg, 1869), part I, p. 389.
15 J. Güldenstädt [I. Gil'denshtedt], *Puteshestvie po Kavkazu v 1770–1773 gg.* (St Petersburg, 2002), p. 79.
16 For text of the nobility's promises to the synod, see *Akty,* I, p. 56.
17 A. A. Tsagareli, *Gramoty i drugie istoricheskie dokumenty XVIII stoletiia . . .* (St Petersburg, 1891), vol. I, p. 16.
18 Rekhviashvili, *imeretis samepo,* pp. 209–16.
19 Jakob Reineggs, *Allgemeine historisch-topographische Beschreibung des Kaukasus* (Gotha, 1796–7), pp. 380–82.
20 Tamarati, *L'eglise géorgienne*, pp. 640–41; Luigi Magarotto, communication with author, August 2012.

16 The Russian Conquest of Kartli-Kakhetia

1 For the respective Russian and Georgian texts, see G. G. Paichadze, ed., *Georgievskii traktat* (Tbilisi, 1983); Giorgi P'aichadze, ed., *georgievsk'is trakt'at'i* (Tbilisi, 1983).
2 A. A. Tsagareli, *Gramoty i drugie istoricheskie dokumenty XVIII stoletiia . . .* (St Petersburg, 1891), vol. I, p. 408.
3 Valerian Mach'aradze, *besik'i diplomat'iur sarbielze* (Tbilisi, 1968), p. 70.
4 Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* (Istanbul, 1983), pp. 347–9, 773–87, 1396.
5 TSGVIA (Central State Military and Historical Archive): 52, 1/194, 366, pt. IV, 114, pp. 41–2, quoted in *Nark'vevebi* IV, 707
6 For text of *firman*, see SMOMPK, 29, pp. 146–8.
7 See Knorring's report of 28 July 1801 in *Akty,* I, p. 426.
8 Al. Jambak'ur-Orbeliani, 'mepis irak'lis meoris . . . ambebi', in *ts'erilebi da masalebi sakartvelos ist'oriistvis*, I, ed. S. Kakabadze (Tbilisi, 1914), pp. 39–40, quoted in *nark'vevebi,* IV, p. 807.
9 E. Meleshko, *Stsena iz minuvshego v Gurii* Kavkaz, I (5 January 1848), pp. 2–3.
10 See Lazarev's report to Knorring of 2 January 1801 in *Akty,* I, pp. 184–6, 189–90.

11 N. N. Beliavskii, *Utverzhdenie russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze t. XII* (Tbilisi, 1901), p. 30.
12 See David's intercepted letters of April 1801 in *Akty*, I, pp. 305–6.
13 *Akty*, I, pp. 324–5.
14 *Akty*, II, p. 23.
15 *Akty*, II, 111–2.
16 *Akty*, II, 178–9.
17 *Akty*, II, p. 311.
18 See Tsitsianov's report to Tsar Alexander in *Akty*, II, pp. 348–51.

17 King Solomon's End

1 Archivio generale dei Cappuccini (Rome) H45 (Georgia 1795–1846), 1; Archivio Propaganda Fide (Vatican City), Lettere e Decreti 281, ff. 281–2r.; 333–4v; 283, 405–6v; 294, 510–1r.
2 *Akty*, II, pp. 482–90, 535.
3 P.A.L. de Driault, *La politique orientale de Napoléon: Sebastiani et Gardane* (Paris, 1904), pp. 170–85, 310–42; D. L. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i Rossiia XVII–XVIII vv*, *kn. 3* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 68–78; Irène Natchkebia, 'Tbilisi dans les écrits français du début du XIXe siècle' and 'La place de la Géorgie dans le traité de Finkenstein', in *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe*, ed. Florence Hellot-Bellier and Irène Natchkebi (Paris, 2009), pp. 89–141.
4 Michel Tamarati, *L'eglise géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours*(Rome, 1910), pp. 647–9.
5 For Solomon's Persian original and a Russian translation, see *Akty*, III, p. 173.
6 A. A. Baramidze et al., *P. I. Ioseliani* (Tbilisi, 1978), pp. 200–201; *Akty*, IV, pp. 283–4.
7 *Akty*, IV, pp. 342–3.
8 *Akty*, IV, p. 359.
9 Sergi Jikia, 'shenishvnebi 'simind-semidalis' shesakheb', in *st'alinis sakh. tbilisis universit'et'is shromebi,* XXX–XXXI (Tbilisi, 1947), pp. 429–46.
10 *Akty*, V, pp. 65–81.
11 *Akty*, V, pp. 254, 377, 400–403.
12 Baramidze et al., *P. I. Ioseliani,* pp. 150–51.
13 A. P. Ermolov, *Zapiski, 1798–1826* (Moscow, 1991), p. 298.
14 Bernard Rottiers, *Itinéraire de Tiflis à Constantinople* (Brussels, 1829), pp. 107–30.
15 Ermolov, *Zapiski*, p. 360.
16 Jean-François Gamba, *Voyage dans la Russie méridionale vol. II* (Paris, 1826), pp. 26–180.
17 V. A. Potto, ed., *Utverzhdenie russkago vladychestva na Kavkaze 1801–1901 t. IV, 1* (Tbilisi, 1901–8), p. 286. The original Georgian is lost; E. Veidenbaum's archive contains only the Russian translation.
18 N. N. Beliavskii, *Utverzhdenie russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze XII* (Tbilisi, 1901), p. 164.
19 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), pp. 230–47.
20 *Akty*, VII, pp. 209–11.
21 A. Surguladze and P'. Surguladze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: sak'itkhavi ts'igni* (Tbilisi, 1991), p. 47.
22 *Akty*, VIII, pp. 391–423 (*Delo o gruzinskom zagovore* [Dossier on the Georgian conspiracy]); Vakht'ang Guruli and Bondo K'up'at'adze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: XIX sauk'une* (Tbilisi, 2004), pp. 93–100.

23 Praskov'ia Grigor'evna Rozen (Mitrofaniia), *Zapiski* (Moscow, 2010), pp. 25–30. Like her father, Mother Mitrofania ended in disgrace: she enriched her nunnery with forged cheques.

18 Vice-regency

1 N. N. Beliavskii, *Utverzhdenie russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze IV, 1* (Tbilisi, 1901), p. 286.
2 Georges Charachidzé, *Introduction à l'étude de la féodalité géorgienne (le Code de Georges le Brillant)* (Paris, 1971), p. 30.
3 *Akty*, IX, pp. 56–60.
4 Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage autour du Caucas II* (Paris, 1839), pp. 351–61.
5 Revaz Lominadze, *rusuli martva-gamgebloba sakartveloshi I (1801–1844)* (Tbilisi, 2011), pp. 309–25.
6 *Akty*, IX, p. 39.
7 *Akty*, IX, pp. 690–97.
8 Nodar Gabašvili, *La Georgia e Roma: duemila anni di dialogo* (Vatican City, 2003), pp. 118, 120–21.
9 A. M. Fadeev, *Vospominaniia* (Odessa, 1897), pp. 80–83.
10 A.L.H. Rhinelander, *Prince Michael Vorontsov: Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montreal, 1990), pp. 7–11; V. A. Udovik and V. O. Katsik, *Svetleishii kniaz' M. S. Vorontsov* (St Petersburg, 2000), p. 9.
11 *Akty*, X, pp. 112–14.
12 Beliavskii, *Utverzhdenie*, pp. 480–91.
13 Veronika Khokhlova, 'Lord Uorontsov', *Uchitel'skaia gazeta*, 43 (October 2004). Summary of N. S. Leskov's unpublished story 'Lord Uorontsov' to be published in a forthcoming volume of *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii N. S. Leskova* (Moscow, 1998–).
14 Ak'ak'i Ts'ereteli, *chemi tavgadasavali* (Tbilisi, 1958), vol. VII, p. 78.
15 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), pp. 220–26.
16 *Akty*, X, p. 825.
17 See Mlle Drançay, *Les princesses russes prisonnières au Caucase,* ed. Edouard Merlieux (Paris, 1857); Alexandre Dumas, *Le Caucase* (Paris, 1990), pp. 378–413.
18 S. Iu. Vitte, *Izbrannye vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1991), p. 18.
19 Alfred J. Rieber, ed., *The Politics of Autocracy: Letters of Alexander II to Prince A. I. Bariatinskii, 1857–1864* (Paris, 1966).
20 Ts'ereteli, *chemi tavgadasavali,* p. 94.
21 Rieber, *The Politics of Autocracy,* pp. 105, 148.
22 Beliavskii, *Utverzhdenie,* p. 496.
23 Ibid., pp. 518–22.
24 *Akty*, XII, pp. 374–85.
25 'Vospominaniia A. A. Koliubakinoi', in *Istoricheskii vestnik* (St Petersburg, 1894), vol. IV, pp. 379–407, 694–721.
26 A. Dumas, *Voyage au Caucase* (Paris, 1983), pp. 337–50; Beliavskii, *Utverzhdenie,* pp. 459–60 (attributing high prices to *amkari* [merchants] cartel, despite Vorontsov's efforts to allow free trade).
27 M. Javakhishvili, *Arsena Marabdeli* (Tbilisi, 1935), p. 587.
28 V. M. Mukhanov, *Pokoritel' Kavkaza kniaz' A. I. Bariatinskii* (Moscow, 2007) pp. 187–94; Vitte, *Izbrannye vospominaniia*, pp. 22–3.
29 D. P. Strukov, *Avgusteishii general-fel'dtseikhmeister velikii kniaz' Mikhail Nikolaevich* (St Petersburg, 1906), pp. 243–61.

30 G. A. Dzidzariia, *Makhadzhirstvo i problemy istorii Abkhazii XIX stoletiia* (Sukhumi, 1982), pp. 270–95; D. Reifild and O. Makarova, eds, *Dnevnik A. S. Suvorina* (London, 2000), p. 40.
31 Vakht'ang Guruli and Bondo K'up'at'adze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: XIX sauk'une* (Tbilisi, 2004), pp. 145–56.
32 David Goudiachvili, 'La station séricicole du Caucase au XIXe siècle', in *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe*, ed. Florence Hellot-Bellier and Irène Natchkebia (Paris, 2009), pp. 237–60.
33 A. Surguladze and P'. Surguladze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: sak'itkhavi ts'igni* (Tbilisi, 1991), pp. 78–9.
34 A. I. Rakitin, *Zagadochnye prestupleniia proshlogo* (http://murders.ru.d100.html, accessed 10 May 2012).
35 Vitte, *Izbrannye vospominaniia*, p. 30.
36 Dzidzariia, *Makhadzhirstvo i problemy,* pp. 314–56.

19 Reaction and Revolution

1 N. Nikoladze, *Peregovory Sviashchennoi druzhiny s partieiu "Narodnoi voli" v 1882 g.* (Petrograd, 1917).
2 Sh. Lomsadze, *gviani shua sauk'uneebis sakartvelos ist'oriidan: akhaltsikhuri kronik'ebi* (Tbilisi, 1979), pp. 75–82.
3 Andrzej Furier, *Polacy w Gruzji* (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 249–77.
4 James Bryce, *Transcaucasia and Ararat* (London, 1877), reprinted New York, 1970), p. 372.
5 S. Iu. Vitte, *Izbrannye vospominaniia* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 395–8.
6 N. A. Bigaev, *Poslednie namestniki Kavkaza*, in D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Graf I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov: namestnik kavkazskii* (Moscow, 2008), pp. 403–4
7 A. Surguladze and P'. Surguladze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: sak'itkhavi ts'igni* (Tbilisi, 1991), pp. 138–9.
8 R. I. Ivanov, *General Maksud Alikhanov* (Makhachkala, 2003), pp. 490–613.
9 Ismail-Zade, *Graf I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov,* p. 406.
10 Ibid., pp. 111–85.
11 Ibid., pp. 421–3.
12 Vakht'ang Guruli and Anri Shavladze, 'rogor gadaarchina st'alinma tbilisi dabombvas da rogor gats'ires 3 manetad rusma saldatebma arsena jorjiashvili?', *Tbiliselebi* (17 September 2009).
13 For case papers, see <http://archive.security.gov.ge> <ilias_mkvleloba.html>, accessed November 2011.
14 Mikheil Javakhishvili, *txzulebani t'om 7* (Tbilisi, 2008), p. 501.
15 See T'uli Ashordia, *solomon ashordia – zugdideli kartveli avant'urist'is tavgadasavali* (Tbilisi, 2009); V. Linden, *Vysshie klassy korennogo naseleniia kavkazskogo kraia i pravitel'stvennye meropriiatiia po opredeleniiu ikh soslovnykh prav* (Tbilisi, 1910).
16 Graf Vorontsov-Dashkov, *Vsepoddaneishii otchet za piatiletie upravleniia Kavkazom* (St Petersburg, 1910).
17 Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, *Meine Mission im Kaukasus,* ed. D. Paichadze (Tbilisi, 2001), pp. 227–31 (Appendix, document no. 15).
18 Werner Zürrer, *Kaukasien, 1918–21: der Kampf der Grossmächte um die Landbrücke zwischen Schwarzem und Kaspischem Meer* (Düsseldorf, 1978), pp. 12–15.
19 Ismail-Zade, *Graf I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov,* p. 412.
20 D. Rayfield, 'The Soldier's Lament: Folk Poetry in the Russian Empire, 1914–1917', *Slavonic and East European Review*, LXVI/1 (1988), pp. 66–90.

20 Independence

1 Werner Zürrer, *Kaukasien, 1918–21: der Kampf der Grossmächte um die Landbrücke zwischen Schwarzem und Kaspischem Meer* (Düsseldorf, 1978), pp. 20–22.
2 Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, *Meine Mission im Kaukasus,* ed. D. Paichadze (Tbilisi, 2006), pp. 43–119.
3 Zürrer, *Kaukasien,* p. 60.
4 Kressenstein, *Meine Mission* (appendix), pp. 185–205.
5 A. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East, 1918–1922* (London, 1923), pp. 140–62.
6 Zürrer, *Kaukasien,* p. 300
7 Oliver Wardrop, *The Kingdom of Georgia: Notes of Travel in a Land of Women, Wine and Song* [1888] (London, 2004).
8 TNA, FO 371/ 3657–3673; FO 608/85/1, 88/1.
9 Odette Keun, *Au pays de la Toison d'or: en Géorgie menchéviste indépendante* (Paris, 1923).
10 Gela Suladze, *kartuli ant'isabch'ota emigratsia da sp'etssamsakhurebi 1918–1953* (Tbilisi, 2010), pp. 45–7.
11 A. Surguladze and P'. Surguladze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: sak'itkhavi ts'igni* (Tbilisi, 1991), pp. 391–2.
12 G. I. Kvinitadze, *Moi vospominaniia v gody nezavisimosti Gruzii* (Paris, 1985).
13 For transcript of discussions, see Surguladze and Surguladze, *sakartvelos ist'oria*, pp. 231, 397–401.
14 For a facsimile of Orjonikidze's telegram, see Vakht'ang Guruli, *sakartvelos ist'oria: XX s.* (Tbilisi, 2003), p. 84.

21 Soviet Annexation

1 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), pp. 131–2.
2 *saarkivo moambe*, 1 (2008). pp. 11–13.
3 Gldani: 14, 2, 28, 12-14.
4 *saarkivo moambe*, 8 (2010), pp. 44–53.
5 Gldani: 14, 2, 28, 496.
6 *saarkivo moambe*, 4 (2009), pp. 4–11.
7 Ibid., pp. 56–75.
8 Gldani: 14, 2, 28, 2–10.
9 Gldani: 14, 2, 28, 249–67.
10 Gela Suladze, *kartuli ant'isabch'ota emigratsia da sp'etssamsakhurebi 1918–1953 ts'. ts'.* (Tbilisi, 2010), pp. 81–5.
11 *saarkivo moambe*, 9 (2010), pp. 63–89.
12 For a list of names, see <http://archive.security.gov.ge/daxvretilebi.php>, last accessed November 2011.
13 TSA FSB RF: 2, 2, 86, 40.
14 Suladze, *kartuli*, pp. 100–2.
15 Gldani: 14, 2, 28, 652–4.
16 Suladze, *kartuli*, pp. 162–3
17 Ibid., pp. 209–15.
18 TSA FSB RF: 2, 2, 657, 10–16.
19 Gldani: 14, 3, 241.
20 TSA FSB RF: 2, 5, 386, 40.
21 RGAÈ (Rossiĭskiĭ gosudarstrennyĭ arkhiv èkonomiki): 7486, 37, 133, 165.
22 APRF: 3, 30, 146, 74–7.

23 Gldani: 14, 6, 266, 47–222 (*Materialy po mingrel'skomu voprosu* ['Materials on the Mingrelian Question'] *16 x 1930 – 17 viii 1933*)
24 Gldani: 14, 11, 49.
25 Gldani: 14, 2, 361, 166–263.
26 *saarkivo moambe*, 7 (2009), pp. 19–33.
27 D. Rayfield, 'The Death of Paolo Iashvili', *Slavonic and East European Review*, LXVIII/3 (October 1990), pp. 631–64.
28 *saarkivo moambe*, 2 (2008), p. 49.
29 Gldani: 14, 11, 152, 171 (telegram to Stalin).
30 *saarkivo moambe*, 10 (2010), pp. 5–31.
31 Suladze, *kartuli*, pp. 274–99.
32 *saarkivo moambe*, 4 (2009), pp. 50–55; Eric Hoesli, *A la conquête du Caucase* (Paris, 2006), pp. 402–6.
33 *saarkivo moambe*, 3 (2008), pp. 42–3.
34 D. Rayfield, 'The Soldier's Lament: Folk Poetry in the Russian Empire, 1914–1917', *Slavonic and East European Review*, LXVI/1 (1988), pp. 66–90. Not all Georgian turncoats, however, were so pacifist: in Britanny, Georgians in Wehrmacht uniform gouged out the eyes of captured maquisards, an atrocity for which the Free French forces summarily executed them in August 1944 (see Robert Avon, *Histoire des années 40*, Paris, 1976, vol. III, pp. 285, 288).
35 *saarkivo moambe*, 2 (2008), pp. 55–61.
36 Suladze, *kartuli*, pp. 445–8.
37 Gldani: 14, 27, 12, 97. Lieut.-Col. Jghamadze, who tried Shavdia, saw him in the street.

22 After Stalin

1 See V. P. Naumov and Iu. Sigachev, *Lavrentii Beriia, 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* (Moscow, 1999).
2 O. Volin, 'S berievtsami vo Vladimirskoi tiur'me', and F. Blagoveshchenskii, 'V gostiakh u P. A. Sharii', in *Minuvshee 7* (Moscow, 1992), pp. 357–72.
3 Gldani: 14, 27, 262 ('O provedenii mitingov o deistviiakh Beriia').
4 Gldani: 14, 27, 12 (Fifth joint party plenum, 13–14 July 1953).
5 Gldani: 14, 31, 300 (*Materialy po delu Konstantina Gamsakhurdiia*).
6 Gela Suladze, *kartuli ant'isabch'ota emigratsia da sp'etssamsakhurebi 1918–1953 ts'. ts'* (Tbilisi, 2010), pp. 344–5.
7 *saarkivo moambe,* 9 (2010), pp. 127–43; Gldani: 14, 31, 41, 303–14.
8 Gldani: 14, 32, 209, 396.
9 Gldani: 14, 31, 41, 314.
10 Gldani 14, 32, 209.
11 Jaba Ioseliani, *Tri izmereniia* (Moscow, 2000), p. 80.
12 Gldani: 14, 48, 148.
13 Guiorgui Sanikidze, 'Islam et musulmans en Géorgie contemporaine', in *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe,* ed. Florence Hellot-Bellier and Irène Natchkebia (Paris, 2009), pp. 275–97.
14 Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995), p. 87.
15 *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii,* 32–3 (1976), pp. 46–7.
16 *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii*, 34–5 (1978), pp. 183–6, material supplied anonymously by Zviad Gamsakhurdia.
17 Gldani: 14, 51, 541, Materials of joint KGB and Writers' Union discussion 1 May–7 September 1976 'on the Zviad Gamsakhurdia question'.
18 *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii,* 41–2 (1979), pp. 250–51; and 59–61 (1982), p. 162.

19 *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii,* 50 (1978), pp. 20–40.
20 *saarkivo moambe,* 8 (2010), pp. 150–56.
21 *saarkivo moambe,* 9 (2010), pp. 146–50.

23 Independence Restored

1 For extracts of Gamsakhurdia rhetoric, see Charles van der Leeuw, *Storm over the Caucasus* (Richmond, 1999), pp. 152–3.
2 For a colourful, if not always believable account, see Jaba Ioseliani, *Tri izmereniia* (Moscow, 2000).
3 Van Leeuw, *Storm,* pp. 156–60.
4 For a somewhat selective account of Shevardnadze's return and presidency, see Eduard Schewardnadse, *Als der eiserne Vorhang zerriss* (Duisburg, 2007), pp. 213–365.
5 Jurij Anchabadze, 'History: The Modern Period', and Dodge Billinsley, 'Military Aspects', in *The Abkhazians,* ed. George Hewitt (Richmond, 1999), pp. 132–56.
6 G. Amkuab and T. Illarionova, *Abkhaziia: Khronika neob"iavlennoi voiny, 1* (Moscow, 1992).
7 Pierre Razoux, *Histoire de la Géorgie: la clé du Caucase* (Paris, 2009), pp. 199–35 ('L'ombre du grand frère').
8 See www.arlingtoncemetery.net/frwoodruff.htm, accessed 10 May 2012; Andrew Higgins, 'Our Man in Tbilisi', *Wall Street Journal* (18 October 2008), http://online.wsj.com. Igor Georgadze, ex-KGB, who then defected to Russia, may have organized Woodruff's killing.
9 Shewardnadse, *Als der eiserne Vorhang*, pp. 19–36, for his account.
10 Salome Zourabichvili, *La tragédie géorgienne, 2003–2008* (Paris, 2009), pp. 42–53.
11 See <www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=84075> *zurab zhvanias mk'vleloba*, accessed November 2011.
12 Reports of the Human Rights Centre (formerly the Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre) can be found at <www.humanrights.ge>, accessed 10 May 2012.

Chronology

✠

DATE	WORLD EVENTS	EVENTS IN GEORGIA
1112 BC		*Assyrian King defeats Diauhi (Tao kartvelians?)*
790		*Urartu King invades Shesheti (modern Shavsheti, s.e. Georgia)*
743		*Urartu King Sarduri II defeats Kulha (western Georgia)*
c. 720	*Scythians & Cimmerians conquer Transcaucasia*	*Kartvelian tribes disperse west & north*
450		*Herodotus records Sasperi (Iberians) and Colchians as Persian subjects*
400		*Xenophon's mercenaries encounter Georgian, Mingrelian and Laz tribes*
334–1	*Alexander the Great's conquests*	*Satrap of Iberia, ?Greek-controlled*
299–234		*King Parnavaz I's alleged reign*
188	*Romans conquer Anatolia; Armenia expands in Transcaucasia*	*Colchis becomes autonomous*
169		*Jews migrate to Mtskheta*
66	*Gnaeus Pompey invades Pontus*	*Pompey subdues Iberian King Artag*
47		*Colchis taken over by Pontus*
40–36	*Mark Antony invades Anatolia*	*King Parnavaz II becomes Roman ally*
AD		
51		*Parsman I's Transcaucasian empire opposed by Parthians and Romans*

131		*Hadrian sends Flavius Arrian to tour Colchis and Iberia*
134 or 138		*Parsman II received in Rome*
242–72		*Shapur I of Persia invades all Georgia*
298	*Roman-Persian peace of Nisibis*	*Iberia comes under Roman suzerainty*
313	*Edict of Milan recognizes Christianity*	
317	*eclipse of sun visible from Black to Caspian seas*	*King Mirian III adopts Christianity*
370		*Emerpor Valens invades Iberia*
378		*Iberia becomes Persian vassal again*
465		*King Gobaz I of Lazica-Colchis visits Emperor Leo I and makes peace*
460–80		*King Vakhtang Gorgasali establishes all-Georgian empire*
520		*Persians rule Iberia, subvert Lazica*
551	*Armenians split from Byzantine church, adopting monophysitism*	
554		*Byzantines murder King Gobaz II of Lazica*
626		*Emperor Heracles razes Tbilisi, makes both Iberia and Lazica vassals*
643–5	*Arabs begin conquest of Transcaucasia and Anatolia*	
704		*Tbilisi an Arab emirate under Caliph*
735		*Murvan the Deaf ravages Kartli*
800		*Vasak Bagratun of Armenia marries Iberian princess, founding Georgian Bagration dynasty in Tao-Klarjeti*
853		*Bugha the Turk ravages Kartli and rebel Emirate of Tbilisi*
975		*future Bagrat III by adoption and inheritance becomes heir to all-Georgia's thrones*
979	*Emperor Basil II with help of Davit III of Tao defeats Bardas Skliros*	

1004		*West & East Georgia united under Bagrat III*
1021		*Basil II repossesses S. Georgia*
1071	*Turks defeat Byzantium at Manzikert, capture Romanos IV*	*King Bagrat IV finally makes peace with Turk leader Alp Arslan*
1083		*King Giorgi II submits to Turk Malik Shah: the 'Great Turkdom' begins*
1092	*Malik Shah and his vizier Nizam al-Mulk die*	*King Davit IV the Builder begins recovery of lost territory and rebuilds state and army*
1099	*Crusaders capture Jerusalem*	
1104		*Ruisi-Urbnisi Council reorganizes and subordinates church*
1105		*Kakhetia reunited with Georgia*
1117		*King Davit imports Qipchaqs as mercenaries, divorces Queen Rusudan and marries Qipchaq Gurandukht*
1121–3		*Muslim coalition routed at Battle of Didgori; Tbilisi recaptured as capital*
1131		*King Demetre has half-brother Vakhtang blinded for coup attempt*
1155		*Demetre ovethrown by Giorgi III*
1177–8		*Giorgi has nephew Demna killed after coup attempt, then crowns daughter Tamar as co-monarch*
1188–9		*Queen Tamar divorces Russian husband, marries Davit Soslan*
1195		*Battle of Shamkor expands Georgian empire*
1202		*Battle of Basiani routs Sultan Rukn ad-Din*
1204	*Crusaders sack Constantinople Empire of Trebizond created*	
1220	*Chingiz Khan conquers Central Asia*	*Mongol vanguard enters Georgia*
1225–8		*Chorasmian Jalal ad-Din defeats Georgians at Garnisi, then at Bolnisi*

1231	*Jalal ad-Din murdered*	
1235		*Mongols invade Georgia from east*
1243–7		*Kings David Ulu and Narin seek investiture by Mongols in Karakoram*
1260		*Mongols allow Samtskhe autonomy under Sargis Jaqeli: Georgia now in three parts, west, east and south*
1289		*King Dimitri II executed by Mongols*
1334		*King Giorgi V 'the Brilliant' reunites and stabilises Georgia with legal code*
1347		*Black Death halves population*
1386		*Timur Lang's first invasion*
1402	*Timur Lang routs Sultan Beyazit*	
1405	*Timur Lang dies*	
1407		*Türkmen Qara-Koyunlu invade*
1412		*King Konstantine I executed by Qara Yusuf of Qara-Koyunlu*
1438–9	*Pope Eugene IV calls Ferrara and Florence Ecumenical Council*	*Georgian delegates refuse Union with Roman Catholic church*
1452	*Ottomans take Constantinople*	
1459–60		*Georgian rulers offer Pope and Holy Roman Emperor anti-Turk coalition*
1470	*Tsar Ivan III 'gathers' Russian lands: Moscow is 'third Rome'*	
1490		*Konstantine II calls council: 30-year civil war halted, but no unification*
1555	*Sultan Süleyman, Shah Tahmasp sign Treaty of Amasya, dividing Transcaucasia into Ottoman and Persian zones for 175 years, despite almost perpetual war*	
1569		*Shah Tahmasp imprisons King Simon of Kartli and installs Daud-Khan*
1578		*Shah Khudabanda frees King Simon*
1585		*Russian envoys reach Kakhetia*

1599		*King Simon captured by Turks at Partskhisi, imprisoned in Istanbul*
1605	*Tsar Boris dies: Russia in chaos*	*Prince Konstantine of Kakhetia kills father King Aleksandre II and brother Giorgi on Shah Abbas's orders. Russian envoys leave*
1610		*Shah Abbas patronizes King Teimuraz I of Kakhetia and Luarsab II of Kartli*
1620–4		*Shah Abbas has Teimuraz I's sons castrated and mother martyred, and strangles King Luarsab*
1625		*Giorgi Saakadze's army defeats Shah Abbas at Martqopi: Teimuraz made King of Kartli & Kakhetia. Teimuraz sends envoys to Philip of Spain and Pope*
1626		*Teimuraz attacks & defeats Saakadze at Bazaleti*
1633		*Teimuraz flees Kartli*
1639		*Russian envoys reach Mingrelia*
1649–52		*Teimuraz & King Aleksandre of Imeretia exchange envoys with Moscow*
1658–61		*Teimuraz visits Moscow, then Vakhtang V hands him over to die in prison in Iran. Vakhtang briefly reunites Georgia*
1697	*Tsar Peter the Great tours Europe with Aleksandre Bagration*	
1703–11	*Georgian books printed first in Moscow, then in Tbilisi*	*Kings Erekle I of Kakhetia, Giorgi XI & Kaikhosro of Kartli die in Iranian military service*
1714		*Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's mission to Europe to make Shah Hosein release Vakhtang VI*
1721–2		*Peter the Great induces Vakhtang VI to join in conquest of Caspian coast, then abandons him*

1723–30		*Ottomans rule Tbilisi & most Georgia*
1749		*King Teimuraz II and Erekle II rule & modernise Kartli and Kakhetia, control Shah Rokh*
1752		*Erekle II King of Kartli & Kakhetia Solomon I of Imeretia stabilizes all western Georgia, allies with Erekle II*
1762	*Catherine the Great takes power, intervenes in Kartli-Kakhetia*	
1766–73	*Russo-Turkish war*	*Generals Totleben & Sukhotin 'support' Georgian forces against Turks*
1783		*Erekle II signs* traktat *recognizing Russian suzerainty*
1795		*Agha Mohammed Khan destroys Tbilisi and ravages Kartli*
1800–1		*King Giorgi XII dies; Tsars Paul and Alexander I abolish Kartli monarchy and order royal family deported*
1803		*Dowager Queen Mariam kills General Lazarev. Crown Princes Iulon, Parnaoz, Aleksandre begin guerrilla war*
1806–10	*New Russo-Turkish war*	
1807	*Napoleon offers Georgia to Shah if he joins war against Russia*	
1810		*King Solomon II of Imeretia is deposed & captured, but escapes. 4 guards executed by Gen. Tormasov*
1811		*Georgian Patriarch replaced by Russian exarch. Imeretia rebels*
1812–13	*Napoleon invades Russia*	*Kakhetian-Khevsur rebellion*
1820		*Gurian rebellion crushed*
1826	*Tsar Nicolas I crushes Decembrists; Persia capitulates to Russia (Turkmenchai Treaty)*	*General Paskevich replaces General Ermolov*
1829	*Turkey signs Adrianopolis Treaty*	*Black Sea ports & Akhaltsikhe revert to Russian-ruled Georgia*

1830–1	*Polish rebellion crushed*	
1832–4		*Plotters against Russian rule arrested, interrogated & reprieved*
1837		*Nicolas I visits Transcaucasia, sacks Baron Rozen for son-in-law's crimes*
1841		*New Gurian rebellion crushed*
1845		*Count Vorontsov made viceroy*
1853	*Crimean War begins*	*Dadianis dispossessed of Mingrelia*
1854		*Vorontsov resigns*
1855	*Tsar Alexander II accedes*	
1856	*Treaty of Paris ends war*	*Russia keeps Black Sea ports* *Alexander Bariatinsky made viceroy*
1857		*Utu Mikadze leads Mingrelia rebels* *Svan Prince Dadeshkeliani executed*
1859	*Bariatinsky captures Shamil*	
1860		*Tbilisi opera theatre revived*
1861–2		*Bariatinsky marries Elisabed Orbeliani;* *Tsar's brother Mikhail is viceroy*
1864–6	*Russia deports all Ubykh & most Abkhaz & Circassians to Turkey*	*Abkhazia resettled by Mingrelians* *Tbilisi tradesmen strike* *Abolition of serfdom proceeds slowly*
1872		*Railway reaches Tbilisi from Poti*
1878	*Russo-Turkish War ends: Kars and Ardahan revert to Russia*	*Iveria: 1st viable Georgian periodical*
1879		*Kutaisi Jews cleared of ritual murder*
1881	*Alexander II assassinated*	*Alexander III abolishes viceregency*
1886		*Seminary Rector assassinated*
1903	*General Golitsyn dispossesses Armenian church*	
1904	*Georgian socialists meet in Geneva*	*General Golitsyn resigns after attempt on his life.*
1905	*Russia loses war with Japan: revolution in cities*	*Vorontsov-Dashkov becomes viceroy; appoints 'red' governor Staroselsky in Kutaisi. Strikes and rebellions*

1906	*Russia's first Duma dissolved*	*Bolsheviks kill Gen. Griaznov*
1907		*Ilia Chavchavadze murdered. 'Kamo' robs bank for Bolsheviks, killing many*
1908		*Exarch Nikon murdered*
1914	*World War I begins. Georgian Legion formed in Berlin*	
1915		*Grand Duke Nikolai becomes viceroy; victory over Turks*
1917	*Tsar abdicates. In November Bolsheviks seize power*	*Transcaucasian Committee takes power. November: Georgian National Assembly takes over under Zhordania*
1918	*Treaty of Brest-Litovsk cedes Georgian territory to Ottomans In November Germany and allies surrender to Britain & France*	*May 1918 German mission supervises independent Georgia*
1919		*British take over Batumi and Georgian railways*
1920		*May: Soviets recognize Georgia. Britain withdraws*
1921		*Soviet armies invade and force Georgia into Transcaucasian Soviet Republic. Mensheviks escape with archives and treasures*
1924	*Lenin dies January*	*Anti-Soviet uprising brutally crushed*
1931	*Stalin unopposed. Collectivisation of Soviet peasants*	*Lavrenti Beria made first secretary of Transcaucasian Communist Party*
1936	*Show trials of Old Bolsheviks*	*Georgian SSSR formed. Beria murders Khanjian, Armenian's party chief, and Lakoba, Abkhazia's leader*
1937	*Stalin & Ezhov begin Great Terror, setting quotas for victims*	*Beria arrests 50,000, shoots 20,000*
1938	*Beria heads NKVD in Moscow*	*Kandid Charkviani governs Georgia*
1941–2	*Germans invade USSR*	
1953	*March: Stalin dies; June Beria arrested, shot December*	
1954		*Mzhavanadze rules Georgia, Inauri heads Georgian KGB*
1956	*Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech*	*Hundreds killed in Tbilisi revolt*

1964	*Khrushchev ousted by Brezhnev*	
1972		*Shevardnadze replaces Mzhavanadze*
1977		*Dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia arrested. Abkhazia demands secession*
1985	*Gorbachev in power: perestroika*	*Shevardnadze USSR Foreign Minister*
1989		*April demonstrators killed in Tbilisi*
1990		*Gamsakhurdia elected Chairman of Supreme Soviet. S. Ossetia & Abkhazia demand independence*
1991–2	*USSR dissolved. Yeltsin takes power in Russia*	*Georgia independent; civil war. Ioseliani stages coup. Shevardnadze returns. War with Abkhazia*
1993–5		*Gamsakhurdia murdered. Pro-western political course*
1999	*Putin takes power in Russia*	
2003		*Saakashvili and Zhvania stage 'Rose Revolution' coup*
2005		*Zhvania murdered*
2008		*August war with Russia*

Maps and Dynastic Trees

✠

For a fuller, and in some respects differing genealogy of the rulers of Abhkazia, Lazica and Georgia from 300–1000 AD, see Christian Settipani, *Coninuité des elites à Byzane Durant les siècles obscures* (Paris, 2007), stemmata IV–V, pp. 538–9 .

CIRCASSIA (KABARDA)
OSSETIA
ABKHAZIA
Bichvinta
Anakopia
SUKHUMI
(Sebastopolis)
Tkhuri
Dranda
SVANETIA
Enguri
RACHA
Bedia
LECHKHUMI
Tsalenjikha
Rioni
Oni
ZUGDIDI
IMERETIA
Jruchi
Chqondidi
KINGDOM OF KARTLI
Anaklia
Nakalakevi
Khoni
Gelati
Zhinvali Res.
Shkheri
KUTAISI
Skande
Surami
Gori
POTI
Rioni
Tskenis-tskali
Shorapani
Vardisubani
Sviri
Baghdati
Tskhra-tskaro
OZURGETI
Shemokmedi
Kobuleti
Zhinvali Res.
Ataquri
BATUMI
Gonio
Khulo
AKHALTSIKHE
Chorokhi
PAŞALIK OF ÇILDIR (ATABAGY OF SAMTSKHE)
capital city
city or town
castle or fort
battlefield
church or monastery
WESTERN GEORGIA (IMERETIA, MINGRELIA, GURIA, ABKHAZIA) circa 1500 AD

KISTETI (CHECHNYA)
Argvani
KINGDOM OF KAKHETI
Shatili
KHEVSURETI
Barisakho
Omalo
Aragvi
PSHAVI
TUSHETI
Torghva
Zhinvani
TIANETI
DAGESTAN
Bakhtrioni
Alaverdi
Zedazeni
GREMI
Saguramo
Nekresi
MTSKHETA
TELAVI
Qvareli
Aechala
Martqopi
Ujarma
Gurjaani
TBILISI
Sartichala
Vejini
Alazani
Belakani
Chari
Rustavi
Sighnaghi
Iori
Bodbe
Natlismtsemeli
Zagemi
Davitgareji
Khornabuji
SHAKI (Nukha)
Iori
KIZIQI (KAMBECHANI)
SHAKI
capital city
city or town
castle or fort
battlefield
church or monastery
KAKHETIA circa 1500 AD

KARTLI circa 1500 AD

BLACK SEA
ABKHAZIA
MINGRELIA
GURIA
ACHARA
SHAVSHETI
KLARJETI
CHANETI
TAO
SAMURZAQANO
IMERETIA
KUTAISI
SAMTSKHE
JAVAKHETI
KOLA
ARMENIA
OSSETIA
CHECHNYA
DAGESTAN
KHEVSURETI
KHEVI
PSHAVIA
TUSHETI
RACHA
SVANETIA
DVALETI
GRUZIA
(KARTALINIA-KAKHETIA)
TIFLIS
KAKHETIA
KIZIQU
LORE
MASHIRI
CHAR-BELAKANI
GANJA
(ELIZAVETOPOL)
TREBIZON
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
1804/1840
1804/1857
1804/1810
1810/1864
1829
1811/1828
1878
1829
1801
1803/1830
1813/1828/1878
capital city
city or town
castle or fort
church or monastery
GEORGIA & The Russian Conquest of Transcaucasia 1801-78 AD
Dates show year(s) of initial conquest and final annexation

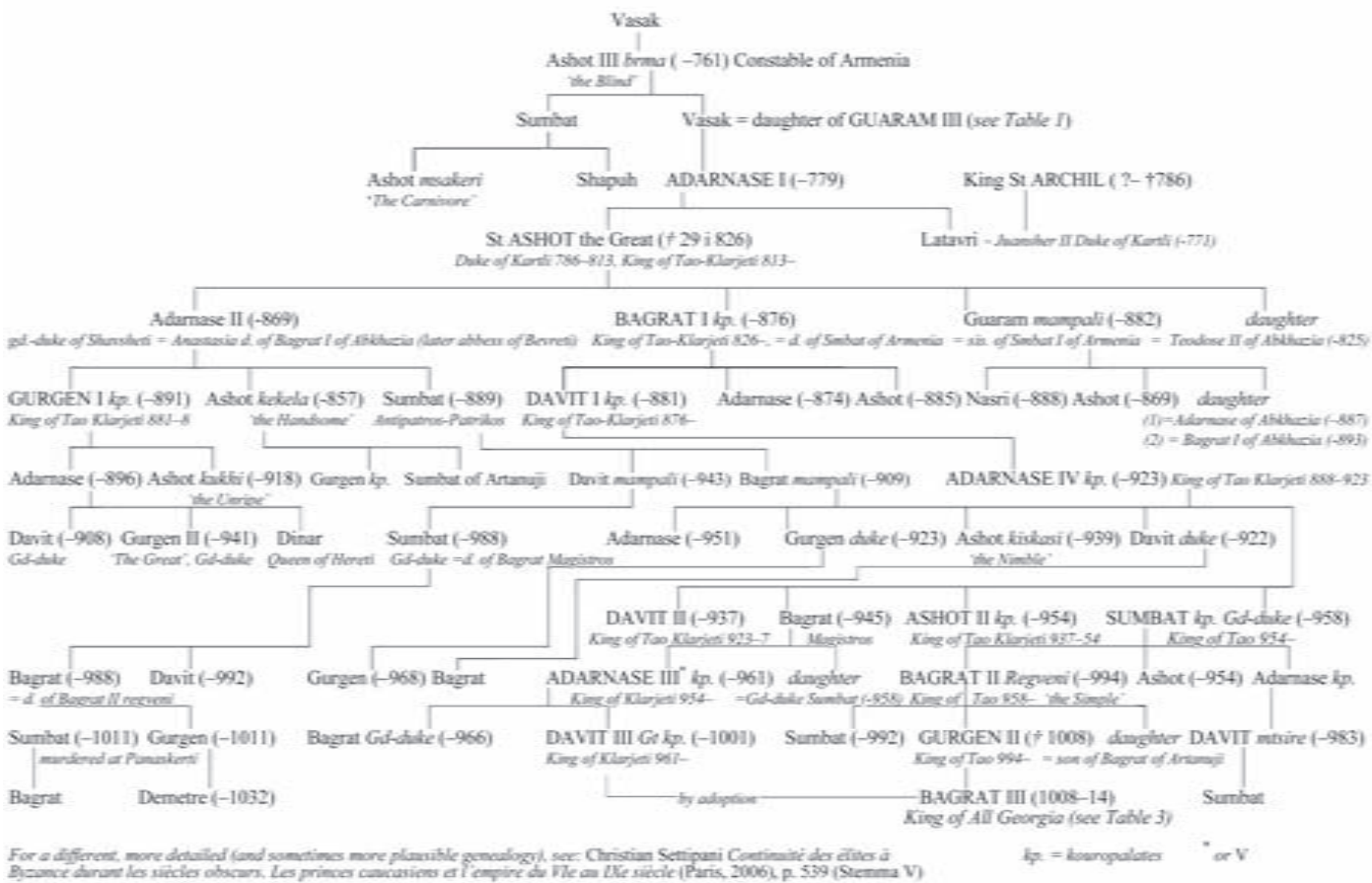
BLACK SEA
KABARDA-BALKARIA
INGUSHETIA
NORTH OSSETIA
CHECHNYA
ABKHAZIA*
SVANETIA
RACHA
LECHKHUMI
MINGRELIA
GURIA
ACHARA
SAMTSKHE
JAVAKHETI
KARTLI
KAKHETIA
KHEVSURETI
PSHAVIA
TUSHETI
DAGESTAN
AZERBAIJAN
ARMENIA
TURKEY
capital city
city or town
castle or fort
church or monastery
*unrecognized states, de facto Russian protectorates since 2008
GEORGIA TODAY

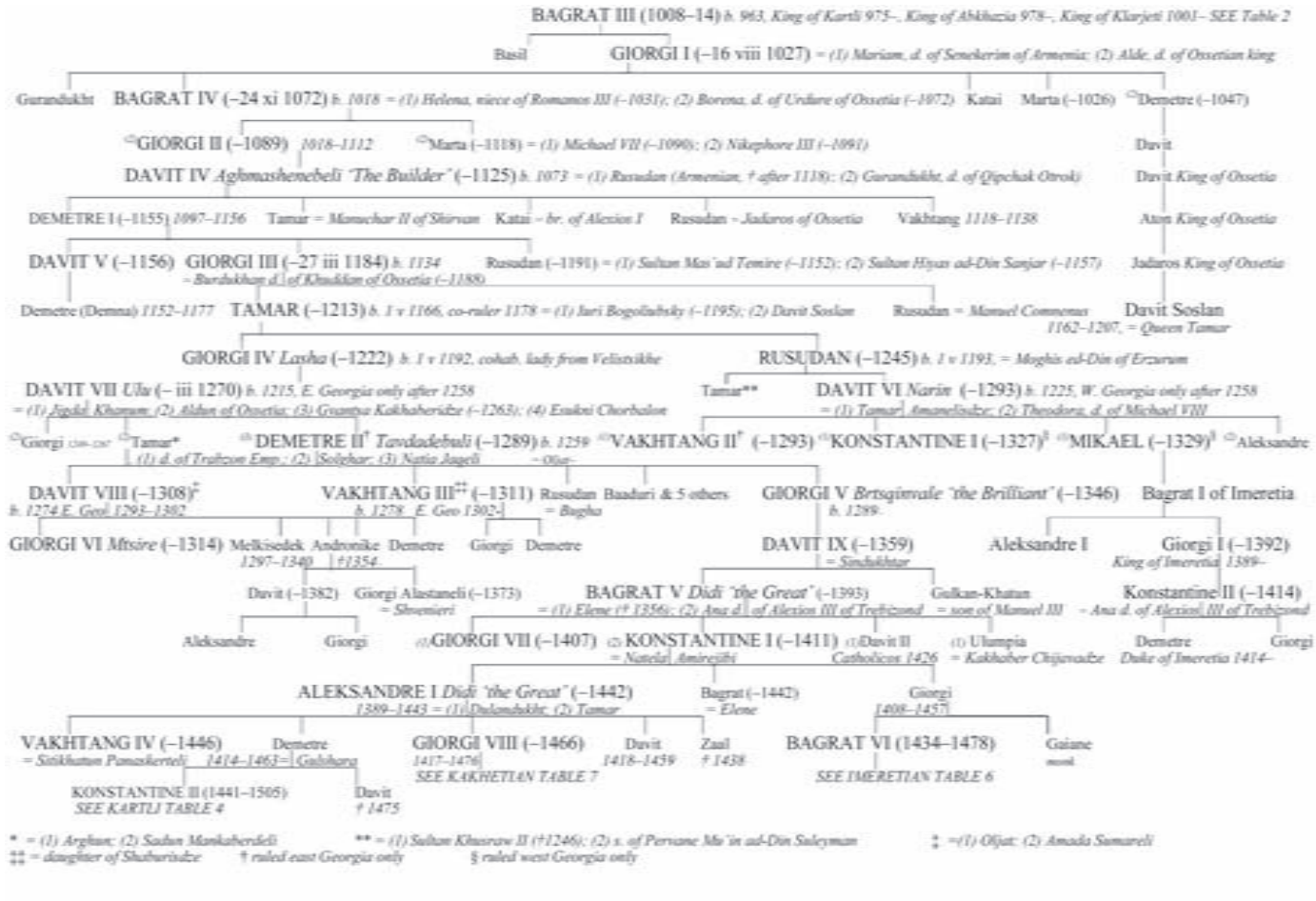
1: PRE-BAGRATID KINGS

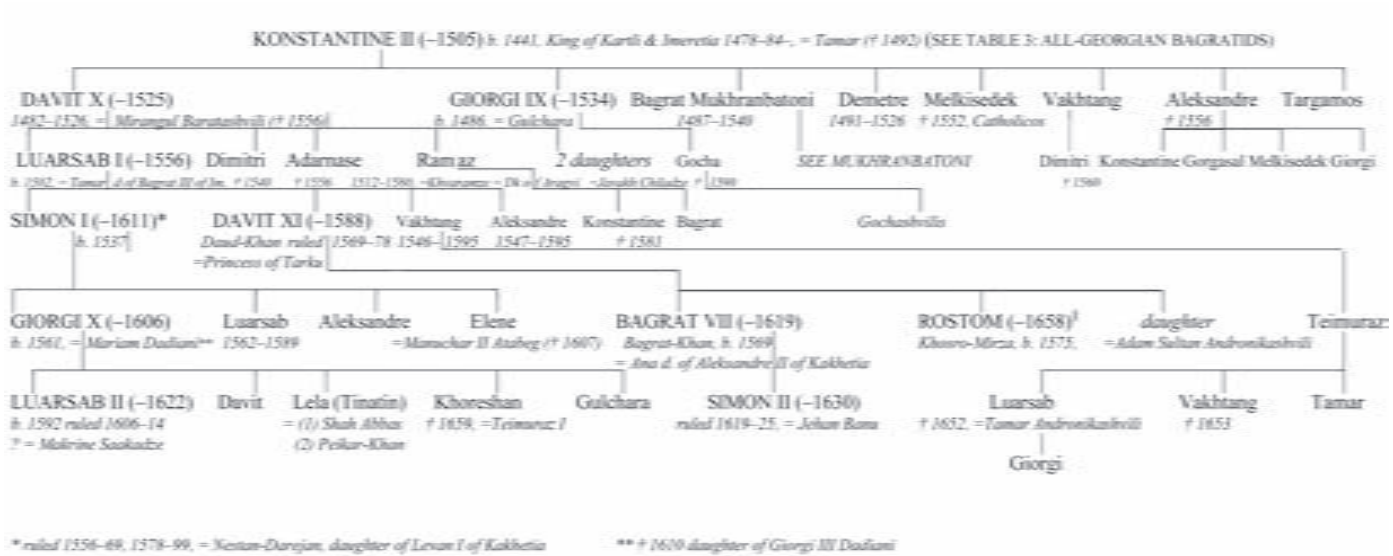
PARNAVAZ I (299–234 BC) = sister of KUJI King of Egrisi (Colchis)
SAURMAG (234–159 BC) Iranian prince
daughter = MIRIAN I (159–109BC)
PARNAJOM (109–90BC) Artavasdes of Armenia (161–123 BC)
MIRIAN II (30–20 BC) Parnavazid princess = ARSHAK (90–78BC)
ARSHAK II (20BC-1AD) ARTAG (78–63BC)
PARNAVAZ II (BARTOM) 63–30 BC
Kartam of Colchis = daughter
PARSMAN I (ADERKI) (1–58) Mihrdat (Mithrodates) of Armenia
Radamist MIHRDAT I (MITHRIDATES) (58–106) AMAZASP I (106–16)
Vologases I of Armenia
Ghadana = PARSMAN II kveli 'Valiant' (117–38)
GHADAM (?RADAMIST) (132–5)
PARSMAN III (138–85)
AMAZASP II (185–9) daughter = Vologas II of Armenia
REV I martali 'the Just' (189–91)
VACHE (216–234)
BAKUR I († 249)
MIHRDAT II (249–60) AMAZASP III (260–5) appointed by Shapur I of Iran
LEV or ?Iranian prince ASPAGUR (265–84) Oligotos of Pontus
MIRIAN III (MIHRAN) (284–361) = (1) Abeshura († 292), (2) Nana
SAURMAG II (361–3) VARAZ–BAKUR (ASPACURES) I (364–78) REV II (346–361) daughter = Peroz later ruler of Tao-Klarjeti?
MIHRDAT III (378–80) TRDAT (394–406)
VARAZ–BAKUR (ASPACURES) II (380–394) = daughter
PARSMAN IV (406–9) MIHRDAT IV (409–after 411)
Barzabod of Iran ARCHIL (after 411–38)
Sagdukht = MIHRDAT V (438–47) Hormizd III of Iran
VAKHANG I Gorgasali 'Wolfhead' (447–522) = (1) Balendukht, (2) Helena niece of Emperor Zeno
(1) DACHI 522–34 (2) Leon archduke W. Iberia 522 (2) Mihrdat archduke W. Iberia 522–34 +4 others prince of Klarjeti 534
BAKUR II 534–57
PARSMAN V (547–61) son
PARSMAN VI (561–?)
BAKUR III (?–580) ruled at Ujarma GUARAM I (Gurgen) (588–90) prince of Klarjeti
ADARNASE I (627-42) 2 sons STEPANOZ I (591–605 or 627) Demetre
STEPANOZ II (642–50) GUARAM II (684–93)
ADARNASE II (650–84) ?son
Stephen prince of Kakhetia GUARAM III (693–748) ADARNASE III (748–760)
Mihr ARCHIL († 786) = d. d. = Vasak Bagratun Guram-Gurgen = d. NERSE (760–72, 775–9)
Adarnase I of Klarjeti (–779) STEPANOZ III (779–86)
4 others Juansher = Latavr ASHOT I the Great

for successors, see Table 2: Tao-Klarjeti Bagratids

This genealogy, constructed as much from legend as from history, mostly follows that of Cyril Toumanoff. For a different, more detailed genealogy, see: Christian Settipani *Continuité des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'empire du VIe au IXe siècle* (Paris, 2006), p. 538 (Stemma IV)

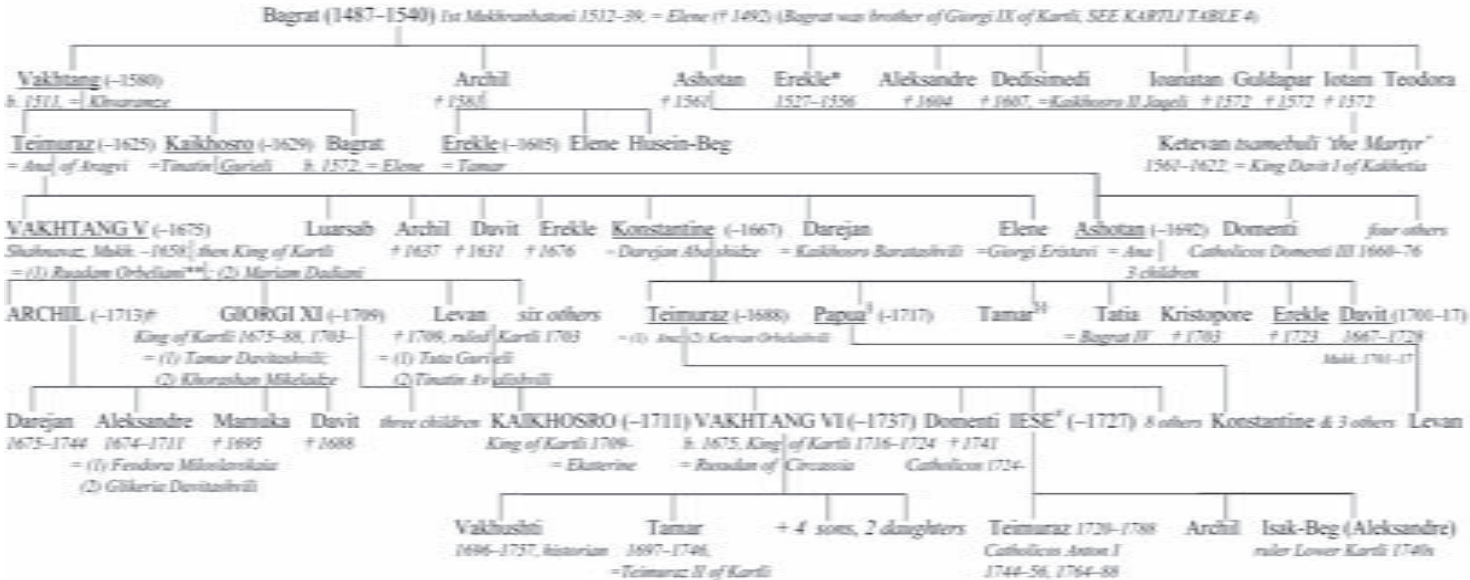

Vasak
Ashot III *brma* (–761) Constable of Armenia
'the Blind'
Sumbat
Vasak = daughter of GUARAM III (*see Table 1*)
Ashot *msakeri*
'The Carnivore'
Shapuh
ADARNASE I (–779)
King St ARCHIL (?– †786)
St ASHOT the Great († 29 i 826)
Duke of Kartli 786–813, King of Tao-Klarjeti 813–
Latavri – *Juansher II Duke of Kartli (-771)*
Adarnase II (-869)
gd.-duke of Shavsheti = Anastasia d. of Bagrat I of Abkhazia (later abbess of Bevreti)
BAGRAT I *kp.* (–876)
King of Tao-Klarjeti 826–, = d. of Smbat of Armenia
Guaram *mampali* (–882)
= sis. of Smbat I of Armenia
daughter
= Teodose II of Abkhazia (-825)
GURGEN I *kp.* (–891)
King of Tao Klarjeti 881–8
Ashot *kekela* (-857)
'the Handsome'
Sumbat (–889)
Antipatros-Patrikios
DAVIT I *kp.* (–881)
King of Tao-Klarjeti 876–
Adarnase (–874)
Ashot (–885)
Nasri (–888)
Ashot (–869)
daughter
(1)=Adarnase of Abkhazia (–887)
(2) = Bagrat I of Abkhazia (-893)
Adarnase (–896)
Ashot *kukhi* (–918)
'the Unripe'
Gurgen *kp.*
Sumbat of Artanuji
Davit *mampali* (–943)
Bagrat *mampali* (–909)
ADARNASE IV *kp.* (–923)
King of Tao Klarjeti 888–923
Davit (–908)
Gd-duke
Gurgen II (–941)
'The Great', *Gd-duke*
Dinar
Queen of Hereti
Sumbat (–988)
Gd-duke =d. of Bagrat *Magistros*
Adarnase (–951)
Gurgen *duke* (–923)
Ashot *kiskasi* (–939)
'the Nimble'
Davit *duke* (–922)
DAVIT II (–937)
King of Tao Klarjeti 923–7
Bagrat (–945)
Magistros
ASHOT II *kp.* (–954)
King of Tao Klarjeti 937–54
SUMBAT *kp. Gd-duke* (–958)
King of Tao 954–
Bagrat (–988)
= d. of Bagrat II *resveni*
Davit (–992)
Gurgen (–968)
Bagrat
ADARNASE III* *kp.* (–961)
King of Klarjeti 954–
daughter
=Gd-duke Sumbat (-958)
BAGRAT II *Regveni* (–994)
King of Tao 958–
Ashot (–954)
'the Simple'
Adarnase *kp.*
Sumbat (–1011)
murdered at Panaskerti
Gurgen (–1011)
Bagrat *Gd-duke* (–966)
DAVIT III *Gt kp.* (–1001)
King of Klarjeti 961–
Sumbat (–992)
GURGEN II († 1008)
King of Tao 994–
daughter
= son of Bagrat of Artanuji
DAVIT *mtsire* (–983)
Bagrat
Demetre (–1032)
by adoption
BAGRAT III (1008–14)
King of All Georgia (*see Table 3*)
Sumbat
For a different, more detailed (and sometimes more plausible genealogy), see: Christian Settipani *Continuité des élites à Byzance durant les siècles obscurs. Les princes caucasiens et l'empire du VIe au IXe siècle* (Paris, 2006), p. 539 (Stemma V)
kp. = *kouropalates*
* *or* V


BAGRAT III (1008–14) b. 963, King of Kartli 975–, King of Abkhazia 978–, King of Kharjeti 1001– SEE Table 2
Basil
GIORGI I (–16 viii 1027) = (1) Mariam, d. of Senekerim of Armenia; (2) Alde, d. of Ossetian king
Gurandukht
BAGRAT IV (–24 xi 1072) b. 1018 = (1) Helena, niece of Romanos III (–1031); (2) Borena, d. of Urdiare of Ossetia (–1072)
Katai
Marta (–1026)
Demetre (–1047)
GIORGI II (–1089) 1018–1112
Marta (–1118) = (1) Michael VII (–1090); (2) Nikephore III (–1091)
Davit
DAVIT IV Aghmashenebeli "The Builder" (–1125) b. 1073 = (1) Rusudan (Armenian, † after 1118); (2) Gurandukht, d. of Qipchak Otroki
Davit King of Ossetia
DEMETRE I (–1155) 1097–1156
Tamar = Manuchar II of Shirvan
Katai – br. of Alexios I
Rusudan – Jadaros of Ossetia
Vakhtang 1118–1138
Atun King of Ossetia
DAVIT V (–1156)
GIORGI III (–27 iii 1184) b. 1134
Rusudan (–1191) = (1) Sultan Mas'ud Temire (–1152); (2) Sultan Hiyas ad-Din Sanjar (–1157)
Jadaros King of Ossetia
– Burdukhan d. of Khuddan of Ossetia (–1188)
Demetre (Demna) 1152–1177
TAMAR (–1213) b. 1 v 1166, co-ruler 1178 = (1) Iuri Bogoliubsky (–1195); (2) Davit Soslan
Rusudan = Manuel Comnenus
Davit Soslan
1162–1207, = Queen Tamar
GIORGI IV Lasha (–1222) b. 1 v 1192, cohab. lady from Velistsikhe
RUSUDAN (–1245) b. 1 v 1193, = Moghis ad-Din of Erzurum
DAVIT VII Ula (– iii 1270) b. 1215, E. Georgia only after 1258
= (1) Jigda Khanum; (2) Aldan of Ossetia; (3) Gvantsa Kakhaberidze (–1263); (4) Enukei Chorbalon
Tamar**
DAVIT VI Narin (–1293) b. 1225, W. Georgia only after 1258
= (1) Tamar Amanelisdze; (2) Theodora, d. of Michael VIII
Giorgi
Tamar*
DEMETRE II† Tavdadebuli (–1289) b. 1259
VAKHTANG II* (–1293)
KONSTANTINE I (–1327)§
MIKAEL (–1329)§
Aleksandre
(1) d. of Trabzon Emp.; (2) Solghar; (3) Natia Jageli
– Olia –
DAVIT VIII (–1308)‡
b. 1274 E. Geo! 1293–1302
VAKHTANG III‡‡ (–1311)
b. 1278 E. Geo 1302–
Rusudan Baaduri & 5 others
= Bagha
GIORGI V Brtsqinvale "the Brilliant" (–1346)
b. 1289
Bagrat I of Imeretia
GIORGI VI Mtsire (–1314)
Melkisedek
Andronike
Demetre
Giorgi
Demetre
1297–1340
†1354
DAVIT IX (–1359)
= Sindukhtar
Aleksandre I
Giorgi I (–1392)
King of Imeretia 1389–
Davit (–1382)
Giorgi Alastaneli (–1373)
= Shvenieri
BAGRAT V Didi "the Great" (–1393)
= (1) Elene († 1356); (2) Ana d. of Alexios III of Trebizond
Gulkan-Khatun
= son of Manuel III
Konstantine II (–1414)
– Ana d. of Alexios III of Trebizond
Aleksandre
Giorgi
(1) GIORGI VII (–1407)
(2) KONSTANTINE I (–1411)
= Natela Amiredibi
(1) Davit II
Catholicos 1426
(1) Ulumpia
= Kakhaber Chijavadze
Demetre
Duke of Imeretia 1414–
Giorgi
ALEKSANDRE I Didi "the Great" (–1442)
1389–1443 = (1) Dulandukht; (2) Tamar
Bagrat (–1442)
= Elene
Giorgi
1408–1457
VAKHTANG IV (–1446)
= Sitikhatun Panaskerteli
Demetre
1414–1463 = Gulshara
GIORGI VIII (–1466)
1417–1476
SEE KAKHETIAN TABLE 7
Davit
1418–1459
Zaal
† 1438
BAGRAT VI (1434–1478)
SEE IMERETIAN TABLE 6
Gaiane
nun†
KONSTANTINE II (1441–1505)
SEE KARTLI TABLE 4
Davit
† 1475
* = (1) Arghun; (2) Sadun Mankaberdeli
** = (1) Sultan Khusraw II († 1246); (2) s. of Persane Mu'in ad-Din Suleyman
‡ = (1) Oljai; (2) Amada Samareli
‡‡ = daughter of Shubanidze
† ruled east Georgia only
§ ruled west Georgia only



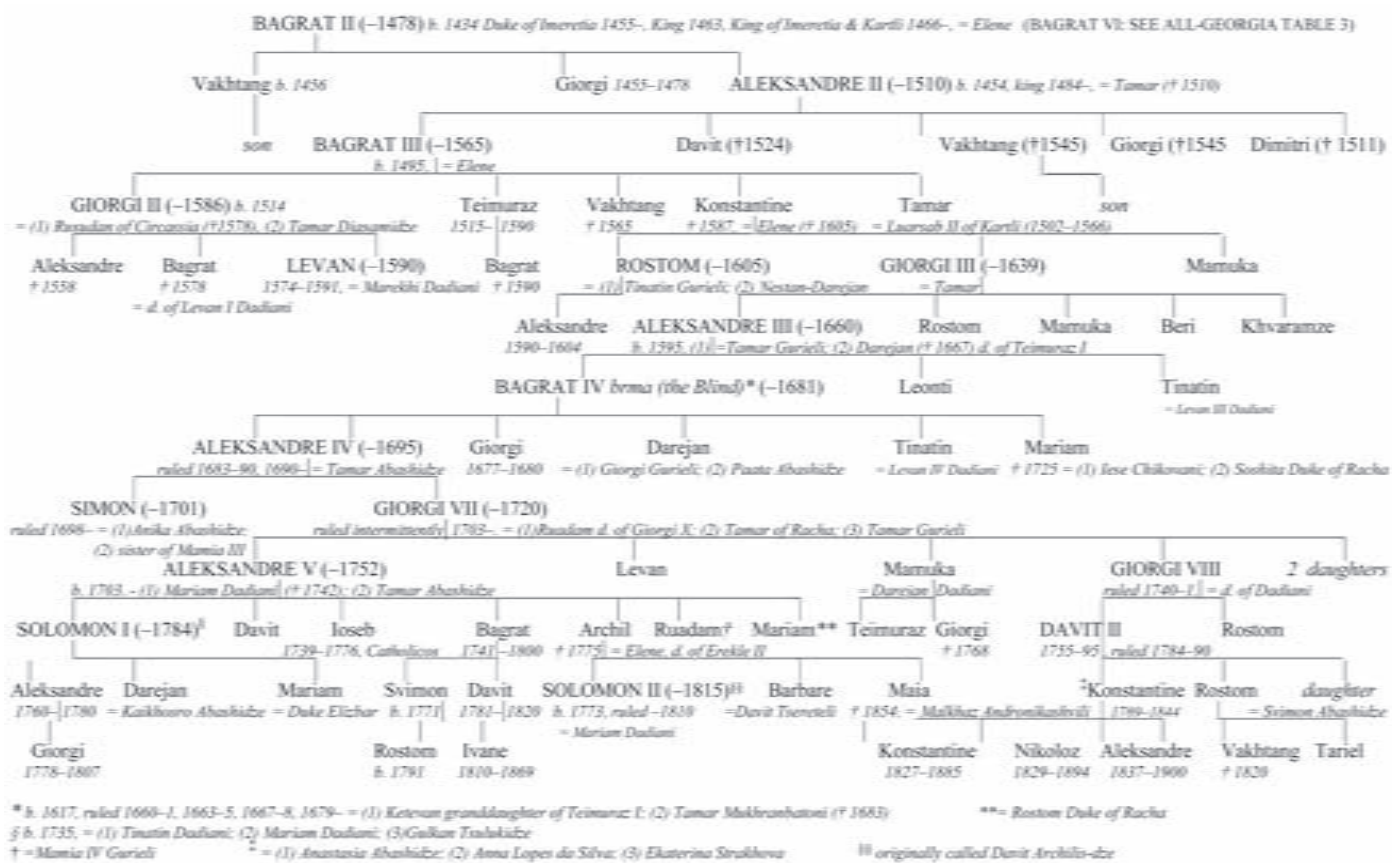
SEE Table 5: MUKHRANBATONI BAGRATIDS for KARTLI 1658–1744

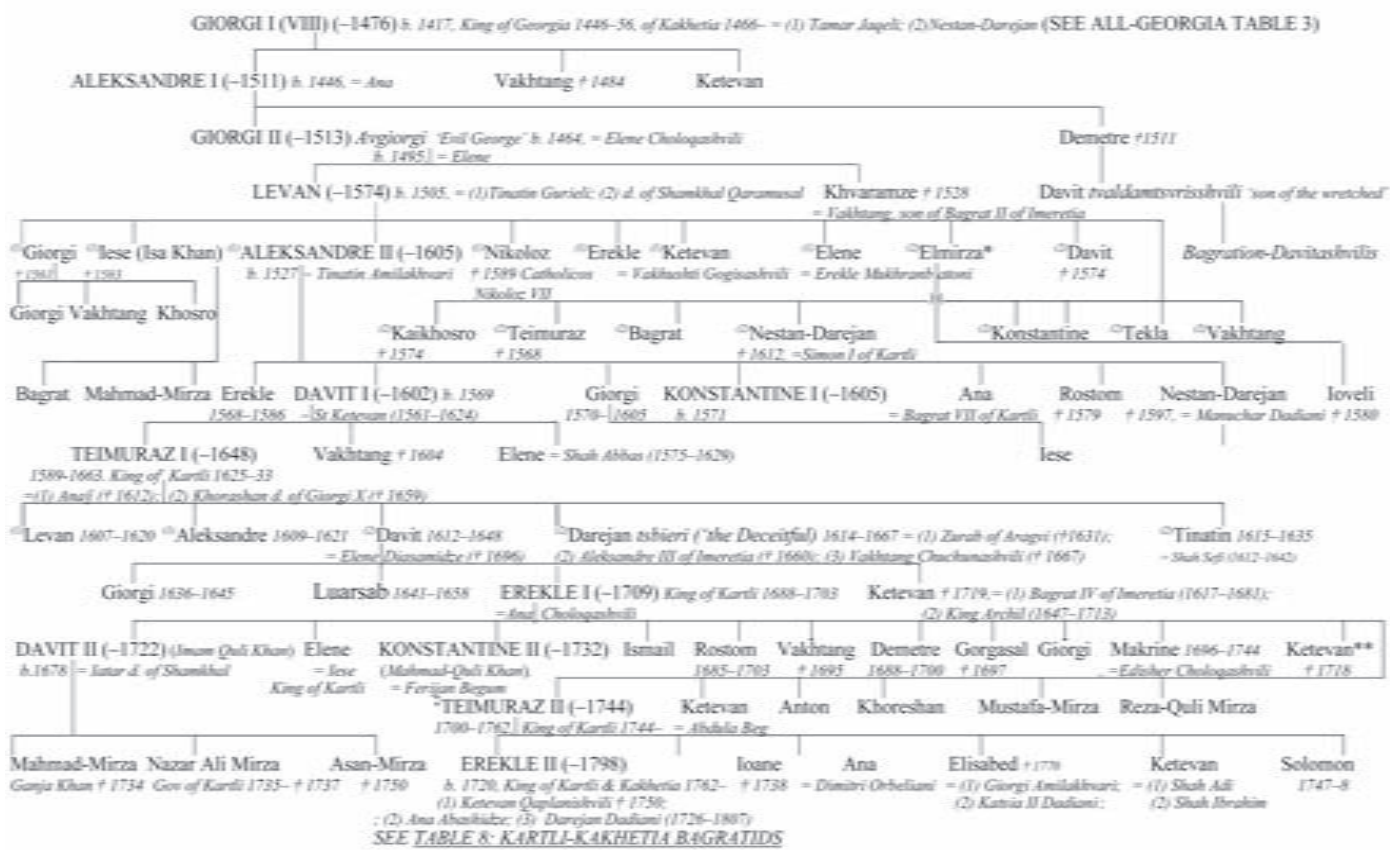
5: MUKHRANBATONI BAGRATIDS *(simplified) [holders of title Mukhranbatoni underlined]*

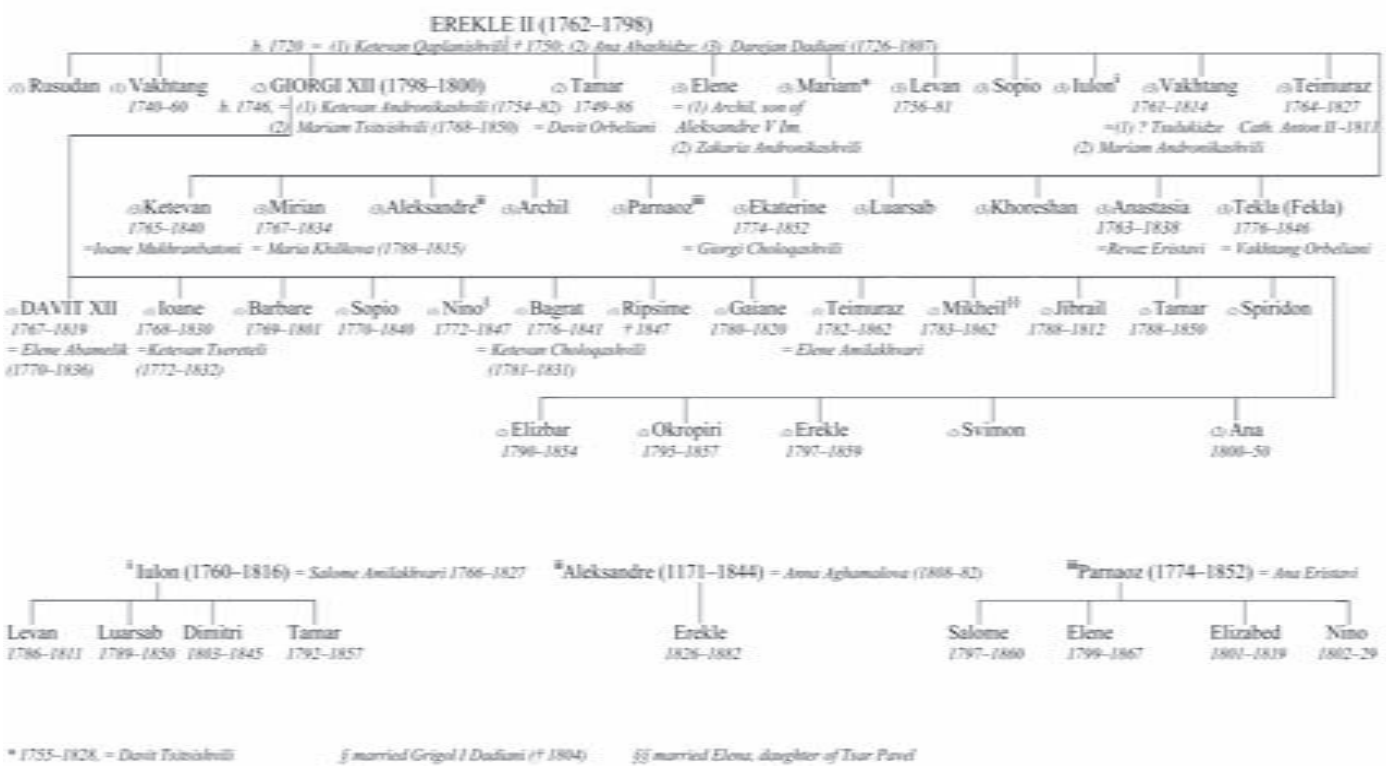

Bagrat (1487–1540) 1st Mukhranbatoni 1512–39; = Elene († 1492) (Bagrat was brother of Giorgi IX of Kartli; SEE KARTLI TABLE 4)
Vakhtang (–1580) b. 1513; = Khvaramze
Archil † 1586
Ashotan † 1561
Erekle* 1527–1556
Aleksandre † 1604
Dedisimedi † 1607, =Kaikhosro II Jaqeli
Ioanatan † 1572
Guldapar † 1572
Iotam † 1572
Teodora
Teimuraz (–1625) = Ana of Aragvi
Kaikhosro (–1629) =Tinatin Garieli
Bagrat b. 1572
Erekle (–1605) = Elene
Elene = Tamar
Husein-Beg
Ketevan tsamebuli 'the Martyr' 1561–1622; = King Davit I of Kakhetia
VAKHTANG V (–1675) Shahnavaz, Mukh. –1658; then King of Kartli = (1) Rusudan Orbeliani**; (2) Mariam Dadiani
Luarsab
Archil † 1637
Davit † 1631
Erekle † 1676
Konstantine (–1667) - Darejan Abashidze
Darejan = Kaikhosro Baratashvili
Elene =Giorgi Eristavi
Ashotan (–1692) = Ana 3 children
Domenti Catholicos Domenti III 1660–76
four others
ARCHIL (–1713)# King of Kartli 1675–88, 1703– = (1) Tamar Davitashvili; (2) Khorashan Mikeladze
GIORGI XI (–1709)
Levan † 1709, ruled Kartli 1703 = (1) Tato Garieli (2) Tinatin Ar[illegible]shvili
six others
Teimuraz (–1688) - (1) Ana (2) Ketevan Orbeliashvili
Papuna§ (–1717)
Tamar§§
Tatia = Bagrat III
Kristopore † 1703
Erekle † 1725
Davit (1700–17) 1667–1729 Mukh. 1701–17
Darejan 1675–1744 = (1) Fevdora Milonlavskaia (2) Glikeria Davitashvili
Aleksandre 1674–1711
Mamuka † 1695
Davit † 1688
three children
KAIKHOSRO (–1711) King of Kartli 1709– = Ekaterine
VAKHTANG VI (–1737) b. 1675, King of Kartli 1716–1724 † 1741 = Rusudan of Circassia
Domenti Catholicos 1724–
IESE* (–1727)
8 others
Konstantine & 3 others
Levan
Vakhushti 1696–1757, historian
Tamar 1697–1746, =Teimuraz II of Kartli
+ 4 sons, 2 daughters
Teimuraz 1720–1788 Catholicos Anton I 1744–56, 1764–88
Archil
Isak-Beg (Aleksandre) ruler Lower Kartli 1740s

* = Elene daughter of King Levan of Kakhetia
** divorced 1658, become nun, † 1678
† King of Kakhetia 1664–75, of Imeretia 1661–3, 1678–98, = Ketevan, grand-daughter of Teimuraz I
§ = Tamar Abashidze, held title from 1692–6
§§ † 1683, = (1) Levan III Dadiani; (2) Bagrat IV of Imeretia; (3) Giorgi III Garieli
# King of Kartli, 1711–6, = (1) Elene Qaplanishvili; (2) Mariam, daughter of Erekle I

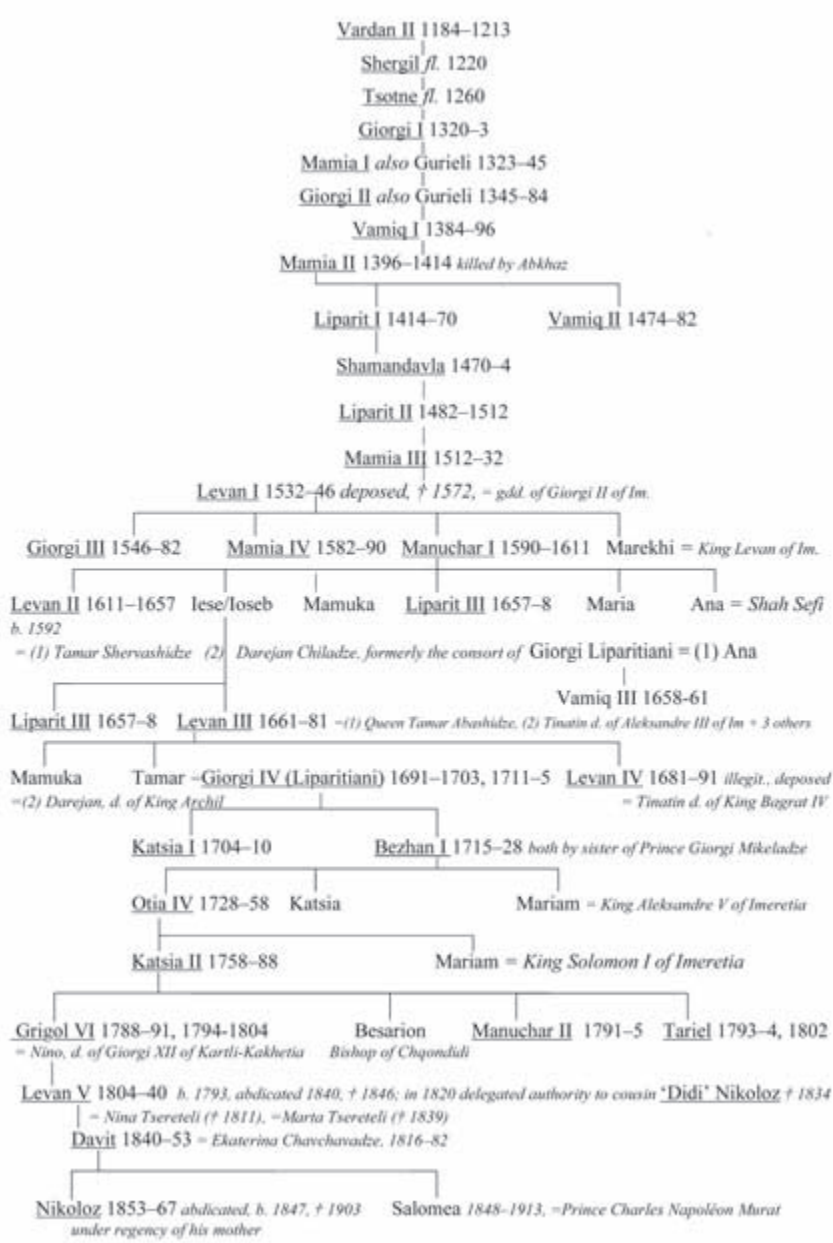
For continuation, see Table 7: Kakhetian Bagratids


BAGRAT II (–1478) b. 1434 Duke of Imeretia 1455–, King 1463, King of Imeretia & Kartli 1466–, = Elene (BAGRAT VI: SEE ALL-GEORGIA TABLE 3)
Vakhtang b. 1456
Giorgi 1455–1478
ALEKSANDRE II (–1510) b. 1454, king 1484–, = Tamar († 1510)
son
BAGRAT III (–1565) b. 1495, = Elene
Davit († 1524)
Vakhtang († 1545)
Giorgi († 1545
Dimitri († 1511)
GIORGI II (–1586) b. 1514
= (1) Rusudan of Circassia († 1578), (2) Tamar Dizapnidze
Teimuraz 1515– 1590
Vakhtang † 1565
Konstantine † 1587, = Elene († 1605)
Tamar = Luarsab II of Kartli (1502–1566)
son
Aleksandre † 1558
Bagrat † 1578 = d. of Levan I Dadiani
LEVAN (–1590) 1574–1591, = Marekhi Dadiani
Bagrat † 1590
ROSTOM (–1605) = (1) Tinatin Gurieli; (2) Nestan-Darejan
GIORGI III (–1639) = Tamar
Mamuka
Aleksandre 1590–1604
ALEKSANDRE III (–1660) b. 1595, (1) = Tamar Gurieli; (2) Darejan († 1667) d. of Teimuraz I
Rostom
Mamuka
Beri
Khvaramze
BAGRAT IV Ivrma (the Blind)* (–1681)
Leonti
Tinatin = Levan III Dadiani
ALEKSANDRE IV (–1695) ruled 1683–90, 1690– = Tamar Abashidze
Giorgi 1677–1680
Darejan = (1) Giorgi Gurieli; (2) Paata Abashidze
Tinatin = Levan IV Dadiani
Mariam † 1725 = (1) Iese Chikovani; (2) Sookita Duke of Racha
SIMON (–1701) ruled 1698– = (1) Anika Abashidze; (2) sister of Mamia III
GIORGI VII (–1720) ruled intermittently 1703–, = (1) Ruadam d. of Giorgi X; (2) Tamar of Racha; (3) Tamar Gurieli
ALEKSANDRE V (–1752) b. 1703, = (1) Mariam Dadiani† († 1742); (2) Tamar Abashidze
Levan
Mamuka = Darejan Dadiani
GIORGI VIII ruled 1740–1 = d. of Dadiani
2 daughters
SOLOMON I (–1784)§
Davit
Ioseb 1739–1776, Catholicos
Bagrat 1741–1800
Archil † 1775
Ruadam†
Mariam**
Teimuraz
Giorgi † 1768
DAVIT II 1755–95
ruled 1784–90
Rostom
Aleksandre 1760–1780
Darejan = Kaikhosro Abashidze
Mariam = Duke Elizbar
Svimon b. 1771
Davit 1781–1820
SOLOMON II (–1815)§§ b. 1773, ruled –1810 = Mariam Dadiani
Barbare =Davit Tsereteli
Maia † 1854, = Malkhaz Andronikashvili
*Konstantine 1789–1844
Rostom
daughter = Svimon Abashidze
Giorgi 1778–1807
Rostom b. 1791
Ivane 1810–1869
Konstantine 1827–1885
Nikoloz 1829–1894
Aleksandre 1837–1900
Vakhtang † 1820
Tariel
* b. 1617, ruled 1660–1, 1663–5, 1667–8, 1679– = (1) Ketevan granddaughter of Teimuraz I; (2) Tamar Mukhranbatoni († 1683)
**= Rostom Duke of Racha
§ b. 1735, = (1) Tinatin Dadiani; (2) Mariam Dadiani; (3) Gulkan Tsulukidze
† = Mamia IV Gurieli
* = (1) Anastasia Abashidze; (2) Anna Lopes da Silva; (3) Ekaterina Strukheva
§§ originally called Davit Archilis-dze

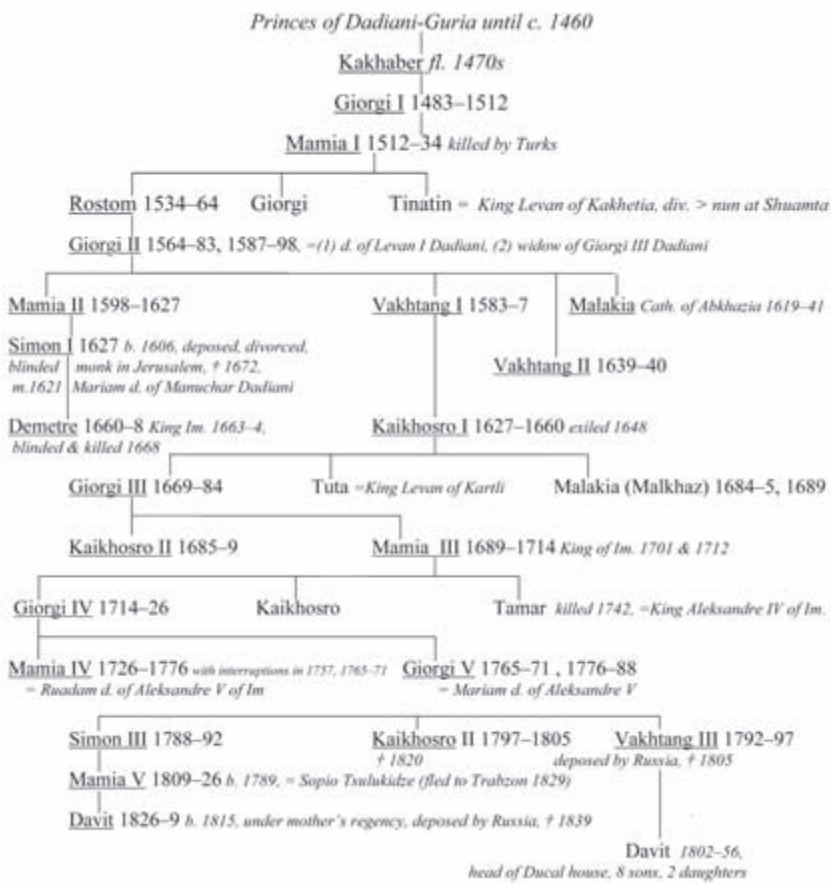

GIORGI I (VIII) (–1476) b. 1417, King of Georgia 1446–56, of Kakhetia 1466– = (1) Tamar Jaqeli; (2) Nestan-Darejan (SEE ALL-GEORGIA TABLE 3)
ALEKSANDRE I (–1511) b. 1446, = Ana
Vakhtang † 1484
Ketevan
GIORGI II (–1513) Avgiorgi "Evil George" b. 1464, = Elene Cholaqashvili
b. 1495 = Elene
Demetre †1511
LEVAN (–1574) b. 1505, = (1) Tinatin Gurieli; (2) d. of Shamkhal Qaramursal
Khvaramze † 1528
= Vakhtang, son of Bagrat II of Imeretia
Davit tvaldamtsvrisshvili "son of the wretched"
Giorgi † 1561
Iese (Isa Khan) † 1583
ALEKSANDRE II (–1605) b. 1527
Nikoloz † 1589 Catholicos Nikoloz VII
Erekle
Ketevan = Vakhushti Gogiashvili
Elene = Erekle Mukhranbatoni
Elmirza*
Davit † 1574
Bagration-Davitashvilis
Giorgi Vakhtang Khosro
Kaikhosro † 1574
Teimuraz † 1568
Bagrat
Nestan-Darejan † 1612, = Simon I of Kartli
Konstantine
Tekla
Vakhtang
Bagrat
Mahmad-Mirza
Erekle 1568–1586
DAVIT I (–1602) b. 1569
= Sr Ketevan (1561–1624)
Giorgi 1570–1605
KONSTANTINE I (–1605) b. 1571
Ana = Bagrat VII of Kartli
Rostom † 1579
Nestan-Darejan † 1597, = Manuchar Dadiani † 1580
Ioveli † 1580
TEIMURAZ I (–1648) 1589-1663, King of Kartli 1625–33
= (1) Anaqi († 1612); (2) Khoreshan d. of Giorgi X († 1659)
Vakhtang † 1604
Elene = Shah Abbas (1575–1629)
Iese
Levan 1607–1620
Aleksandre 1609–1621
Davit 1612–1648
= Elene Dimsamidze († 1696)
Darejan tsbieri ("the Deceitful") 1614–1667 = (1) Zurab of Aragvi († 1631); (2) Aleksandre III of Imeretia († 1660); (3) Vakhtang Chachanashvili († 1667)
Timatin 1615–1635
= Shah Safi (1612–1642)
Giorgi 1636–1645
Luarsab 1641–1658
EREKLE I (–1709) King of Kartli 1688–1703
= Anna Cholaqashvili
Ketevan † 1719, = (1) Bagrat IV of Imeretia (1617–1681); (2) King Archil (1647–1713)
DAVIT II (–1722) (Imam Quli Khan) b.1678
= Iatar d. of Shamkhal
Elene = Iese King of Kartli
KONSTANTINE II (–1732) (Mahmad-Quli Khan) = Fereijan Begum
Ismail 1685–1703
Rostom † 1695
Vakhtang 1688–1700
Demetre † 1697
Gorgasal
Giorgi
Makrine 1696–1744 = Edzisher Cholaqashvili
Ketevan** † 1718
TEIMURAZ II (–1744) 1700–1762, King of Kartli 1744– = Abdala Beg
Ketevan
Anton
Khoreshan
Mustafa-Mirza
Reza-Quli Mirza
Mahmad-Mirza Ganja Khan † 1734
Nazar Ali Mirza Gov of Kartli 1735– † 1737
Asan-Mirza † 1750
EREKLE II (–1798) b. 1720, King of Kartli & Kakhetia 1762– † 1798
(1) Ketevan Qaplanishvili † 1750; (2) Ana Abashidze; (3) Darejan Dadiani (1726–1807)
Ioane † 1738
Ana = Dimitri Orbeliani
Elisabed † 1778 = (1) Giorgi Amilakhvari; (2) Katsia II Dadiani;
Ketevan = (1) Shah Adil (2) Shah Ibrahim
Solomon 1747–8
SEE TABLE 8: KARTLI-KAKHETIA BAGRATIDS
* 1532–1574, =Ketevan ** = Abel Andronikashvili ? = (1) Tamar d. of Duke of Aragvi; (2) Tamar d. of Vakhtang VI († 1746); (3) Ana Baratashvili (1734–1784) § daughter of Mamia II Gurieli


EREKLE II (1762–1798)
b. 1720 = (1) Ketevan Qaplanishvili† † 1750; (2) Ana Abashidze; (3) Darejan Dadiani (1726–1807)
Rusudan 1740–60
Vakhtang 1748–60
GIORGI XII (1798–1800)
b. 1746, = (1) Ketevan Andronikashvili (1754–82) (2) Mariam Tsitsishvili (1768–1850)
Tamar 1749–86 = Davit Orbeliani
Elene = (1) Archil, son of Aleksandre V Im. (2) Zakaria Andronikashvili
Mariam* 1755–81
Levan 1756–81
Sopio
Iulon[i] 1761–1814 =(1) ? Tsulukidze (2) Mariam Andronikashvili
Vakhtang 1764–1827 Cath. Anton II–1811
Teimuraz
Ketevan 1765–1840 =Ioane Mukhranbatoni
Mirian 1767–1834 = Maria Khilkova (1788–1815)
Aleksandre[ii] 1770–1844
Archil
Parnaoz[iii] 1774–1852 = Giorgi Cholokashvili
Ekaterine 1774–1852
Luarsab
Khoreshan
Anastasia 1783–1838 =Revaz Eristavi
Tekla (Fekla) 1776–1846 = Vakhtang Orbeliani
DAVIT XII 1767–1819 = Elene Abamelik (1770–1836)
Ioane 1768–1830 =Ketevan Tsereteli (1772–1832)
Barbare 1769–1801
Sopio 1770–1840
Nino[§] 1772–1847 = Ketevan Cholokashvili (1781–1831)
Bagrat 1776–1841
Ripsime † 1847
Gaiane 1780–1829
Teimuraz 1782–1862 = Elene Amilakhvari
Mikheil[§§] 1783–1862
Jibrail 1788–1812
Tamar 1788–1850
Spiridon
Elizbar 1790–1854
Okropiri 1795–1857
Erekle 1797–1859
Svimon
Ana 1800–50
[i] Iulon (1760–1816) = Salome Amilakhvari 1766–1827
Levan 1786–1811
Luarsab 1789–1850
Dimitri 1803–1845
Tamar 1792–1857
[ii] Aleksandre (1171–1844) = Anna Aghumalova (1808–82)
Erekle 1826–1882
[iii] Parnaoz (1774–1852) = Ana Eristavi
Salome 1797–1860
Elene 1799–1867
Elizabed 1801–1839
Nino 1802–29
* 1755–1828, = Davit Tsitsishvili
§ married Grigol I Dadiani († 1804)
§§ married Elena, daughter of Tsar Pavel

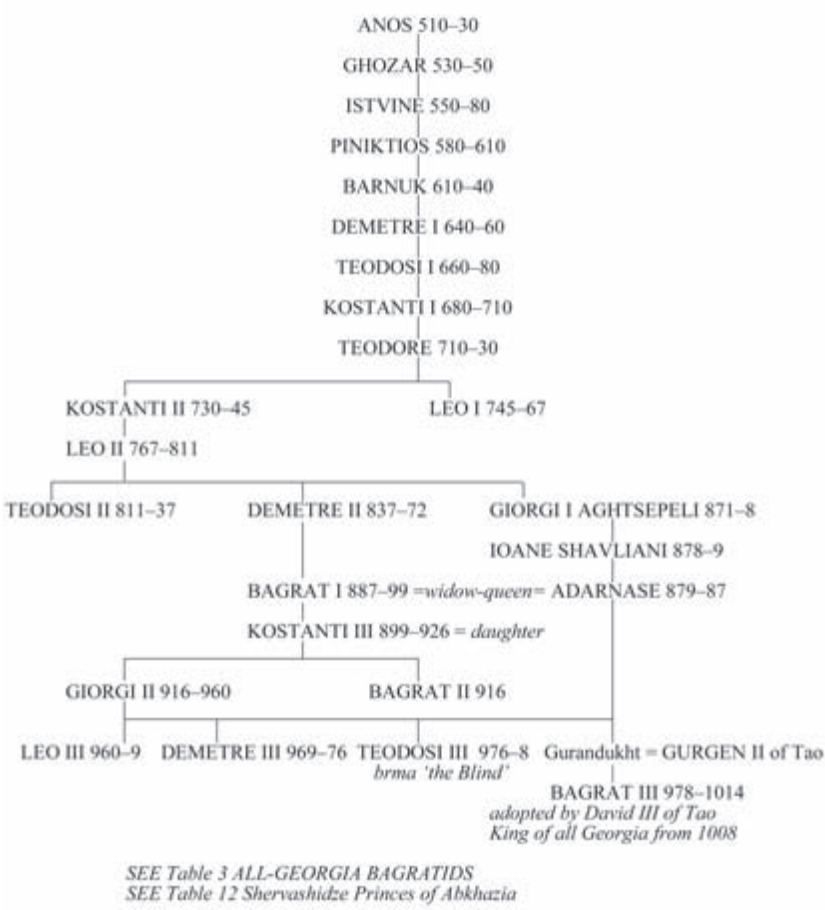
9: DADIANI PRINCES OF MINGRELIA *(simplified)*


Vardan II 1184–1213
Shergil fl. 1220
Tsotne fl. 1260
Giorgi I 1320–3
Mamia I also Gurieli 1323–45
Giorgi II also Gurieli 1345–84
Vamiq I 1384–96
Mamia II 1396–1414 killed by Abkhaz
Liparit I 1414–70
Vamiq II 1474–82
Shamandavla 1470–4
Liparit II 1482–1512
Mamia III 1512–32
Levan I 1532–46 deposed, † 1572, = gdd. of Giorgi II of Im.
Giorgi III 1546–82
Mamia IV 1582–90
Manuchar I 1590–1611
Marekhi = King Levan of Im.
Levan II 1611–1657
b. 1592
= (1) Tamar Shervashidze (2) Darejan Chiladze, formerly the consort of
Iese/Ioseb
Mamuka
Liparit III 1657–8
Maria
Ana = Shah Sefi
Giorgi Liparitiani = (1) Ana
Vamiq III 1658-61
Liparit III 1657–8
Levan III 1661–81 =(1) Queen Tamar Abashidze, (2) Tinatin d. of Aleksandre III of Im + 3 others
Mamuka
=(2) Darejan, d. of King Archil
Tamar
Giorgi IV (Liparitiani) 1691–1703, 1711–5
Levan IV 1681–91 illegit., deposed
= Tinatin d. of King Bagrat IV
Katsia I 1704–10
Bezhan I 1715–28 both by sister of Prince Giorgi Mikeladze
Otia IV 1728–58
Katsia
Mariam = King Aleksandre V of Imeretia
Katsia II 1758–88
Mariam = King Solomon I of Imeretia
Grigol VI 1788–91, 1794-1804
= Nino, d. of Giorgi XII of Kartli-Kakhetia
Besarion
Bishop of Chqondidi
Manuchar II 1791–5
Tariel 1793–4, 1802
Levan V 1804–40 b. 1793, abdicated 1840, † 1846; in 1820 delegated authority to cousin 'Didi' Nikoloz † 1834
= Nina Tsereteli († 1811), =Marta Tsereteli († 1839)
Davit 1840–53 = Ekaterina Chavchavadze, 1816–82
Nikoloz 1853–67 abdicated, b. 1847, † 1903
under regency of his mother
Salomea 1848–1913, =Prince Charles Napoléon Murat

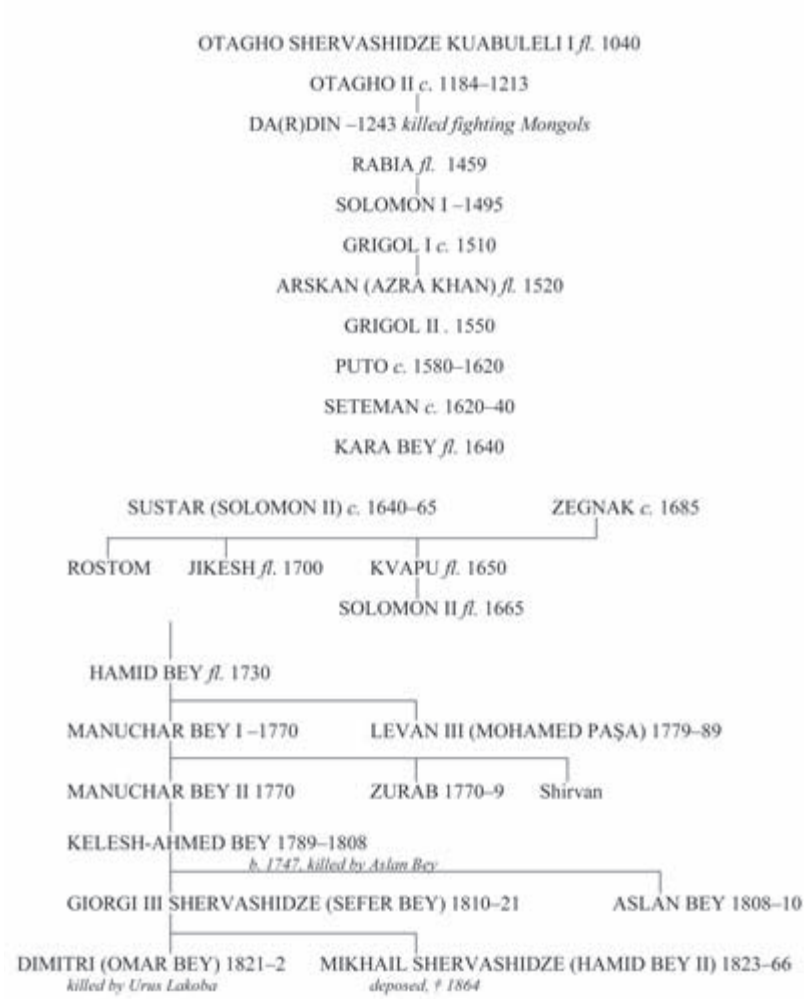
10: PRINCES OF GURIA *(simplified)*


Princes of Dadiani-Guria until c. 1460
Kakhaber fl. 1470s
Giorgi I 1483–1512
Mamia I 1512–34 killed by Turks
Rostom 1534–64
Giorgi
Tinatin = King Levan of Kakhetia, div. > nun at Shuamta
Giorgi II 1564–83, 1587–98 =(1) d. of Levan I Dadiani, (2) widow of Giorgi III Dadiani
Mamia II 1598–1627
Vakhtang I 1583–7
Malakia Cath. of Abkhazia 1619–41
Simon I 1627 b. 1606, deposed, divorced, blinded m.1621 monk in Jerusalem, † 1672. Mariam d. of Manuchar Dadiani
Vakhtang II 1639–40
Demetre 1660–8 King Im. 1663–4, blinded & killed 1668
Kaikhosro I 1627–1660 exiled 1648
Giorgi III 1669–84
Tuta =King Levan of Kartli
Malakia (Malkhaz) 1684–5, 1689
Kaikhosro II 1685–9
Mamia III 1689–1714 King of Im. 1701 & 1712
Giorgi IV 1714–26
Kaikhosro
Tamar killed 1742, =King Aleksandre IV of Im.
Mamia IV 1726–1776 with interruptions in 1757, 1765–71 = Ruadam d. of Aleksandre V of Im
Giorgi V 1765–71 , 1776–88 = Mariam d. of Aleksandre V
Simon III 1788–92
Kaikhosro II 1797–1805 † 1820
Vakhtang III 1792–97 deposed by Russia, † 1805
Mamia V 1809–26 b. 1789, = Sopio Tsulukidze (fled to Trabzon 1829)
Davit 1826–9 b. 1815, under mother's regency, deposed by Russia, † 1839
Davit 1802–56, head of Ducal house, 8 sons, 2 daughters

11: ANCHBA KINGS OF ABKHAZIA



12: SHERVASHIDZE (CHACHBA) PRINCES OF ABKHAZIA



13: EMIRS OF TBILISI

Shuabids

Ismail bin Shuab *before* 813

Mohammed bin Atab 813-829

Ali bin Shuab 829-833

Is'hak bin Ismail bin Shuab 833-853

Shaybanids

Mohammed bin Khalil 853-870

Isa bin ash-Sheikh ash-Shayban 870-876

Ibrahim 876-878

Gabulots 878-880

Jaffarids

Jaffar I bin Ali 880-914

Mansur bin Jaffar 914-952

Jaffar II bin Mansur 952-981'

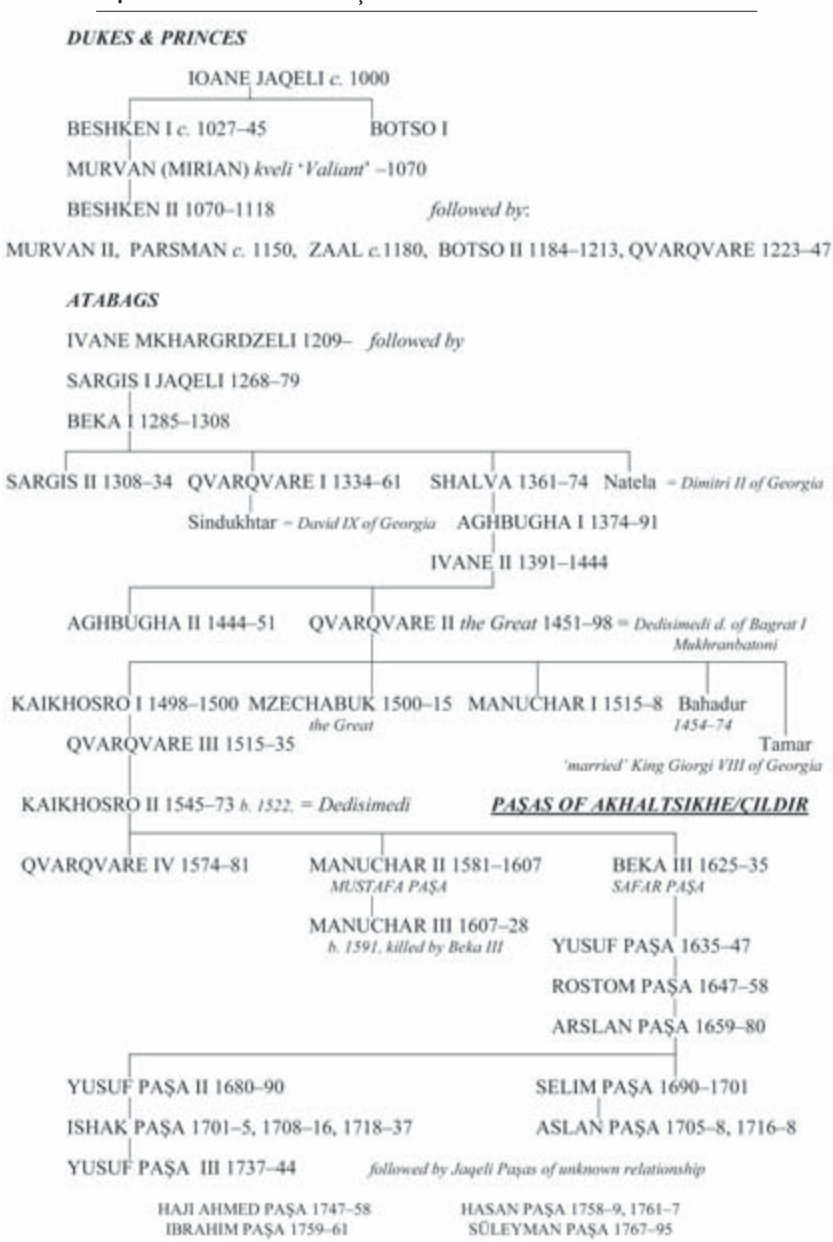
Ali bin Jaffar 981-1032

Jaffar III bin Ali 1032–1046

Mansur II bin Jaffar 1046–1054

Abu'l-Haija bin Jaffar 1054–1062

14: ATABAGS AND PAŞAS OF SAMTSKHE-AKHALTSIKHE


DUKES & PRINCES
IOANE JAQELI c. 1000
BESHKEN I c. 1027–45
BOTSO I
MURVAN (MIRIAN) kveli 'Valiant' –1070
BESHKEN II 1070–1118
followed by:
MURVAN II, PARSMAN c. 1150, ZAAL c.1180, BOTSO II 1184–1213, QVARQVARE 1223–47
ATABAGS
IVANE MKHARGRDZELI 1209– followed by
SARGIS I JAQELI 1268–79
BEKA I 1285–1308
SARGIS II 1308–34
QVARQVARE I 1334–61
SHALVA 1361–74
Natela = Dimitri II of Georgia
Sindukhtar = David IX of Georgia
AGHBUGHA I 1374–91
IVANE II 1391–1444
AGHBUGHA II 1444–51
QVARQVARE II the Great 1451–98 = Dedisimedi d. of Bagrat I Mukhranbatoni
KAIKHOSRO I 1498–1500
MZECHABUK 1500–15 the Great
MANUCHAR I 1515–8
Bahadur 1454–74
QVARQVARE III 1515–35
Tamar 'married' King Giorgi VIII of Georgia
KAIKHOSRO II 1545–73 b. 1522, = Dedisimedi
PAŞAS OF AKHALTSIKHE/ÇILDIR
QVARQVARE IV 1574–81
MANUCHAR II 1581–1607 MUSTAFA PAŞA
BEKA III 1625–35 SAFAR PAŞA
MANUCHAR III 1607–28 b. 1591, killed by Beka III
YUSUF PAŞA 1635–47
ROSTOM PAŞA 1647–58
ARSLAN PAŞA 1659–80
YUSUF PAŞA II 1680–90
SELIM PAŞA 1690–1701
ISHAK PAŞA 1701–5, 1708–16, 1718–37
ASLAN PAŞA 1705–8, 1716–8
YUSUF PAŞA III 1737–44
followed by Jaqeli Paşas of unknown relationship
HAJI AHMED PAŞA 1747–58
IBRAHIM PAŞA 1759–61
HASAN PAŞA 1758–9, 1761–7
SÜLEYMAN PAŞA 1767–95

Select Bibliography

✠

In English

W.E.D. Allen, ed., *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings, 1589–1605* (London, 1970)

Z. Avalishvili, 'Teimuraz I and his poem *The Martyrdom of Queen Ketevan*', *Georgica*, I/4 (1937)

J. Barbaro and A. Contarini, *Travels to Tana and Persia* (London, 1873)

David Braun, *Georgia in Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994)

A. Furtwängler, *Iberia and Rome* (Langenweissbach, 2001)

Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane* [1860] (London, 1958)

George Hewitt, ed., *The Abkhazians* (Richmond, 1999)

Stephen F. Jones, *Socialism in Georgian Colors* (Cambridge, MA, 2005)

D. M. Lang, *The Last Days of the Georgian Monarchy* (New York, 1957)

Charles van der Leeuw, *Storm over the Caucasus* (Richmond, 1999)

Roin Metreveli, *The Golden Age*, trans. Elene Paghava (Tbilisi, 2010)

Tamila Mgaloblishvili, ed., *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus* (Richmond, 1998)

Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, *History of the Warres between the Turkes and the Persians*, trans. A. Hartwell (London, 1595)

Stephen H. Rapp, Jr, *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts* (Louvain, 2003)

Donald Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia* (London, 2010)

Kalistrat Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation*, trans. Katharine Vivian (Paris, 1983)

Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (London, 1994)

R. W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History* (Oxford, 1996)

Cyril Toumanof, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, DC, 1963)

Katharine Vivian, trans., *The Georgian Chronicle: The Period of Giorgi Lasha* (Amsterdam, 1991)

In Russian

S. A. Belokurov, *Posol'stvo d'aka Fedota Elchina i sv. Pavla Zakhar'eva v Dadianskuiu zemliu* (Moscow, 1884)

———, *Snosheniia Rossii s Kavkazom* I–IV (Moscow, 1889)

A. Berzhe, ed., *Akty, sobrannye kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu komisseiu tt I–XII* (Tbilisi, 1888–1902)

Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Perepiska na inostrannykh iazykakh gruzinskikh tarei s rossiiskimi gosudariami ot 1639 g. po 1770 g.* (St Petersburg, 1861)

P. G. Butkov, *Materialy dlia novoi istorii Kavkaza s 1722 po 1803 god* (St Petersburg, 1869)
G. A. Dzidzariia, *Makhadzhirstvo i problemy istorii Abkhazii XIX stoletiia* (Sukhumi, 1982)
A. P. Ermolov, *Zapiski 1798–1826* (Moscow, 1991)
D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Graf I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov: namestnik kavkazskii* (Moscow, 2008)
R. I. Ivanov, *General Maksud Alikhanov* (Makhachkala, 2003)
S. S. Kakabadze, *Gruzinskie dokumenty Instituta Narodov Azii AN SSSR* (Moscow, 1967)
———, *Gruzinskie dokumenty v sobranii leningradskogo otdela Instituta Vostokovedenia* (Moscow, 1987)
G. I. Kvinitadze, *Moi vospominaniia v gody nezavisimosti Gruzii* (Paris, 1985)
G. A. Melikishvili, *K istorii drevneĭ Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1959)
V. M. Mukhanov, *Pokoritel' Kavkaza kniaz' A. I. Bariatinskii* (Moscow, 2007)
V. P. Naumov and Iu. Sigachev, *Lavrentii Beriia, 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TSK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* (Moscow, 1999)
E. A. Pakhomov, *Monety Gruzii* (Tbilisi, 1970)
M. Polievktov, ed., *Posol'stvo stol'nika Tolochanova i d'iaka Ievleva v Imeretiiu* (Moscow, 1926)
———, *Materialy po istorii gruzino-russkikh otnoshenii (1615–40),* vol. I (Tbilisi, 1937)
V. A. Potto, *Utverzhdenie russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze I–XII* (Tbilisi, 1901–8)
———, *Sbornik materialov dlia opisaniia mestnostei i plemion Kavkaza* vols 1–45, tt. 1–45 (Tbilisi, 1881–1915)
D. P. Strukov, *Avgusteishii general-fel'dtseikhmeister velikii kniaz' Mikhail Nikolaevich* (St Petersburg, 1906)
A. A. Tsagareli, *Gramoty i drugie istoricheskie dokumenty XVIII stoletiia . . . I–II* (St Petersburg, 1891)
V. A. Udovik and V. O. Katsik, *Svetleishii kniaz' M. S. Vorontsov* (St Petersburg, 2000)
D. L. Vateishvili, *Gruziia i evropeiskie strany, Gruziia i Rossiiia*, vols I–VII (Moscow, 2003–6)
Graf Vorontsov-Dashkov, *Vsepoddaneishii otchet za piatiletie upravleniia Kavkazom* (St Petersburg, 1910)

In Other Languages

Marie-Félicité Brosset, *Eclaircissements à l'histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité* (Paris, 1851)
———, and D. Chubinov, *Histoire de la Géorgie I–II* (St Petersburg, 1849–58)
Georges Charachidzé, *Introduction à l'étude de la féodalité géorgienne (le Code de Georges le Brillant)* (Paris, 1971)
Jean Chardin, *Voyage de Paris à Ispahan*, ed. Stefan Yerasimos (Paris, 1983)
Lajos Fekete, *Zur Geschichte der Grusiner des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Budapest, 1951)
Andrzej Furier, *Polacy w Gruzji* (Warsaw, 2009)
Nodar Gabašvili, *La Georgia e Roma: duemila anni di dialogo* (Vatican City, 2003)
Antonio de Gouvea, *Relations des grandes guerres* (Rouen, 1646)
Florence Hellot-Bellier and Irène Natchkebia, eds, *La Géorgie entre Perse et Europe*, (Paris, 2009)
Odette Keun, *Au pays de la Toison d'or: en Géorgie menchéviste indépendante* (Paris, 1923)
J. Klaproth, *Güldenstädts Beschreibung der kaukasischer Länder* (Berlin, 1834)
Arcangelo Lamberti, *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia . . .* (Naples, 1654)
Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, *Meine Mission im Kaukasus*, ed. D. Paichadze (Tbilisi, 2001)

Ibrahim Peçevi, *Tarih-i Peçevî* (Istanbul, 1968–9, Ankara, 1981–2)
Pierre Razoux, *Histoire de la Géorgie: la clé du Caucase* (Paris, 2009)
Bernard Rottiers, *Itinéraire de Tiflis à Constantinople* (Brussels, 1829)
Eduard Schewardnadse, *Als der eiserne Vorhang zerriss* (Duisburg, 2007)
Werner Seibt, ed., *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia* (Spoleto, 1996)
Michel Tamarati, *L'eglise géorgienne des origines jusqu'à nos jours* (Rome, 1910)
C. Toumanoff, *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de la Caucasie chrétienne: Arménie–Géorgie–Albanie* (Rome, 1976)
Giuseppe-Maria Zampi, *Relation de la Colchide et de la Mingrélie,* in J. F. Bernard, *Recueil des voyages au nord*, vol. VII (Paris, 1715)
Salome Zourabichvili, *La tragédie géorgienne, 2003–2008* (Paris, 2009)
Werner Zürrer, *Kaukasien, 1918–21: der Kampf der Grossmächte um die Landbrücke zwischen Schwarzem und Kaspischem Meer* (Düsseldorf, 1978)

In Georgian

I. S. Dolidze, *kartuli samartlis dzeglebi*, vol. I (Tbilisi, 1963)
Vakht'ang Guruli, Bondo K'up'at'adze *sakartvelos ist'oria: XIX sauk'une* (Tbilisi, 2004)
———, *sakartvelos ist'oria: XX sauk'une* (Tbilisi, 2003)
Ivane Javakhishvili *kartveli eris ist'oria*, vols I-V (Tbilisi 1953–64)
Buba K'udava, ed., *Ist'oriani: sametsniero k'rebuli* (Tbilisi, 2009)
Revaz Lominadze, *rusuli martva-gamgebloba sakartveloshi I (1801–44)* (Tbilisi, 2011)
Eldar Mamistvalishvili, *kartvel ebraelta ist'oria (ant'ik'uri da peodalizmis khana)* (Tbilisi, 1995)
Giorgi Melikishvili, *kartuli ist'oriis nark'vevebi tt I-VII* (Tbilisi, 1970–80)
Roin Met'reveli, *Davit Aghmashenebeli* (Tbilisi, 1990)
——— ed., *kartlis tskhovreba* (Tbilisi, 2008)
———, *mepe tamari* (Tbilisi, 1991)
———, *Saist'orio nark'vevebi* (Tbilisi, 2009)
———, and Jaba Samushia *mepet mepe giorgi II* (Tbilisi, 2003)
Iskander Munshi, *tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb* (Tbilisi, 1969)
V. Puturidze, ed., *kartul-sp'arsuli ist'oriuli sabutebi* (Tbilisi, 1955)
———, *hasan rumlus tsnobebi sakartvelos shesakheb* (Tbilisi, 1966)
Mikheil Rekhviashvili, *imeretis samepo 1462–1810* (Tbilisi, 1989)
———, *samtskhis samtavro XIII–XVI ss.* (Tbilisi, 1992)
Gela Suladze, *kartuli ant'isabch'ota emigratsia da sp'etssamsakhurebi 1918–1953* (Tbilisi, 2010)
I. Surguladze, *Kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* (Tbilisi, 1970)
A. Surguladze and P'. Surguladze, *sakartvelos ist'oria: sak'itkhavi ts'igni* (Tbilisi, 1991)
M. Svanidze, *sakartvelo-osmaletis urtiertobis ist'oriidan (XV–XVII ss)* (Tbilisi, 1971)
M. Tamarashvili, *ist'oria k'atolik'obisa kartvelta shoris* (Tbilisi, 1902)
Natela Vachnadze, ed., *sakartvelos ist'oria I* (Tbilisi, 2008)
Vakhushti, *sakartvelos tskhovreba* (Tbilisi, 1913)
T. Zhordania, *Kronik'ebi I, II* [1892, 1897] (Tbilisi, 2004)

Photo Acknowledgements

The author and publishers wish to express their thanks to the following sources of illustrative material and/or permission to reproduce it:

The Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Wardrop Collection: 333; courtesy of the Charkviani family: 356; Archive of the Georgian Communist Party, Gldani: 385 (top); courtesy of *Georgian Messenger*, Tbilisi: 396; from Hyazinth Holland, *Theodor Horschelt* (Munich, 1914): 287; Archive of the Ministry of Interior, Tbilisi, courtesy of Omar Tushurashvili: 315, 343; courtesy the Khelovnebis instituti, Tbilisi: 87, 106; from *Literaturuli sakartvelo* (1938): 347; courtesy Davit Paichadze, Tbilisi: 328; courtesy the Biblioteca Comunale, Palermo: 202, 203, 204, 205, 206; Shutterstock Images LLC: 295 (bottom); Imeretia Tbilisis sajaro biblioteka: 249 (bottom), 295 (top).

This is an index of names of all but the most ephemeral persons, places, and institutions in the main text of the book. To enable readers to trace the original spelling, Georgian names are transliterated more systematically than in the main text: the consonants p, t, k, ts, ch are followed by an apostrophe when they are 'ejective', i.e., unlike the corresponding aspirated p, t, k, ts and ch, which have no apostrophe, they are pronounced before air is exhaled. (Names of westernised Georgians are not marked in this way.) In the transliteration of Russian names, the Library of Congress system is followed (except for names such as Khrushchev with an accepted English spelling), and the apostrophe represents the Cyrillic 'soft sign'.

Where a place name has an established English name, this is used instead of a transliteration of the original: thus we have Rach'a, but Ajaria (instead of Ach'ara), Kakhetia instead of K'akheti. The same principle applies to names of most Tsars, Popes and Byzantine emperors etc.

Arabic and Persian names are transliterated in the currently most consensual forms.

Surnames in Georgia evolved mostly in the eighteenth century, so that earlier persons should be sought under the Christian forename, and later persons under surname. Titles, such as *amilakhvari* ('master of the King's horse'), also evolved into surnames, so that they, too, at first precede, and later follow the Christian name. Certain figures, such as the ruling princes of Christian Samtskhe, are here listed under their surnames, Mkhargrdzeli or Jaqeli; otherwise, most hereditary rulers are listed by Christian names.

Kings of all Georgia or Kartli are usually just by name and roman number. Kings and princes of Georgia's regions then follow, with the region they ruled over.

Index

Abagha, Ilkhan 132, 134–6
Abakumov, Viktor Semionovich 364, 367
Abashidzes 180, 218, 231, 240
Abashidze, Aslan 382–3, 389, 393
Abashidze, Davit 235
Abashidze, Dimit'ri 291
Abashidze, Giorgi *see* Giorgi VI of Imeretia
Abashidze, Ivane 276–7
Abashidze, Kaikhosro 252
Abashidze, K'it'a 323
Abashidze, Levan 230, 236, 240
Abashidze, P'aat'a 218
Abashidze, Simon 230
Abashidze, Vakhusht'i 235
Abashidze, Zurab 229, 234–6
Abashishvili, Ketevan,
1st wife of King Rost'om I 198
Abastumani 357
Abaza 48–9, 300
Abaza-Paşa of Erzurum 196
Abazasdze, Ivane 77
Abazgian *see* Abaza
Abbas I, Shah 179, 182–94, 197–8, 373, 389
Abbas II, Shah 208–13
Abbas III, Shah 232
Abbas Mirza 273–4, 277
Abbas Quli Khan 213
Abbasid 58
Abo, St 58
Abeshura 36
Abkhaz, ~ia 8, 14, 15–17, 27, 32–3, 40, 42–3, 45, 48–50, 53, 56–67, 69–71, 73–5, 78, 82–4, 88–9, 92, 94, 112, 125, 127, 129, 130, 132, 136, 139–40, 144, 152–3, 159–60, 162, 165, 167, 174–5, 181, 192, 194–5, 215, 218, 227–8, 231, 234–5, 239, 266, 268, 270, 282, 285, 289, 292–4, 296, 298, 300–1, 304, 307–8, 314–15, 317–19, 326–7, 329, 332, 337, 339, 349–52, 354, 356, 359, 363, 365, 367–72, 376–84, 386–7, 389–91, 393–4, 396–9
Abraham, Catholicos of Armenia 53
Abram I Catholicos 136, 138
Abram of Garesja 234
Abu al-Muzaffar, Emir 98
Abul Aswar of Ani 80
Abu Bakr, Atabagh 112–13, 120
Abu Bakr, grandson of Timur Lang 152
Abu'l Haija, son of Emir Jaffar III 79
Abuladze, Tengiz 353
Abul Qasim al-Saj 63, 67
Abu Sa'id, Ilkhan 139–40
Abulasan 109
Abuleti of Kakhetia 89
Abuleti, General 93, 99–100
Abuletisdze, Ivane 93, 99
Abulsuar of Ani 99
Achaemenid 18–20, 22
Aciselene 41–2
Adam Sultan Andronik'ashvili 200
Adarnase I 52–3
Adarnase II 55–7
Adarnase III 58, 64
Adarnase I of Hereti 60
Adarnase II of Hereti 60
Adarnase I of Klarjeti 64
Adarnase II of Shavsheti 66, 76
Adarnase IV of T'ao 66–7
Adarnase III, son of Gurgen I of T'ao-K'larjeti 67
Adarnase Gd Duke of T'ao 60
Adarnase *patrikios* 61

Adenauer, Konrad 369
Aderki *see* Parsman I
Adil Shah 233–4
Adrianopolis (Edirne) 41, 278
Adriatic 159
Æëtes, King 14
Æëtes of Lazica 38, 50
Afghan, ~istan 120, 213, 222–3, 225–6, 228, 237, 377, 397
Africa 163, 231, 399
Agathias Scholasticus 38
Agha Mohammed Khan 253, 255–6
Aghabugha *see* Jaqeli
Aghbugha of Gagi 125
Aghbugha of Trebizond 145
Aghjaqala *see* Gagi
Aghniashvili, P'et're 349
Aghsartan I of Kakhetia 80–82, 84, 86–7
Aghsartan I of Shirvan 102
Ahmad, Emir 83
Ahmad, Abagha's brother 136
Ahmed Paşa (Çıldır) 170, 179
Ahmed Paşa, Haji 240
Ahmed Paşa (vizier) 228
Ahmed I, Sultan 183
Ahmed III, Sultan 228
Ajaria 73, 125, 133–4, 158, 167, 169–70, 189, 200, 246, 285, 304–5, 312, 327, 339–40, 348–9, 351, 353, 361, 367, 382–3, 389, 393
Akhalgori 398
Akhalkalaki 73, 81, 111, 167, 169–70, 176, 271, 274, 326, 329, 331–2, 348, 389–90
Akhaltsikhe 73, 114, 122–3, 153, 156, 158, 161, 179, 188, 199–200, 213, 216–19, 227–32, 234, 236, 239–40, 242–4, 251–2, 254, 257–8, 263, 267–72, 274, 276, 278–9, 284, 286, 293, 302, 307–8, 326, 329
Akhmet'a 272
Akhmet'eli, Sandro 353
Akhsartan I of Shirvan 109, 112
Akht'ala 319
Akhverdov, Maj. Fiodor Isaevich 269
Ak-Koyunlu 152, 164
Akopian, Lazar 341
Aksu *see* Tetri Ts'qali
Akush 120
Ala Temur, Khan 133
Alamein, El 361
Alamut 127, 129, 172–3, 176, 183
Alan, ~ia *see* Ossetia, ~n
Alaska 318
Alaverdi 92–3, 165, 185, 189, 190–91, 196, 198, 201, 210, 225, 319
Alaverdi Khan 196, 198
Alazan, river 18, 22
Albania, ~n (Balkan) 12
Albania, ~n, Caucasian (Arran) 12, 16, 24, 26–7, 29–30, 32–3, 36, 38, 41–2, 44–6, 50, 52–3, 55–6, 58–60, 63, 74, 81, 89–90, 94, 100, 112
Alde of Ossetia 76–7, 110
Aleksandra Fiodorovna, Tsarina 287
Aleksandre I 'the Great' 152–6, 161
Aleksandre I of Imeretia 148
Aleksandre II of Imeretia 159, 161–2, 165
Aleksandre III of Imeretia 194, 197–201, 207–10
Aleksandre IV of Imeretia 217–20, 228
Aleksandre V of Imeretia 230–31, 234–6, 239
Aleksandre I of Kakhetia 161–5
Aleksandre II of Kakhetia 173, 176, 178, 181–5, 187
Aleksandre, grandson of Vakht'ang VI 238, 241, 245–6, 251
Aleksandre, son of Davit VI 132
Aleksandre, son of Erek'le II 255, 257, 260, 262, 267–71, 273–4, 276, 281–2
Aleksandre, son of Solomon I 245–6
Aleksandre, son of Teimuraz I 190, 192
Aleksandre Amilakhori 238
Aleksandrov, Piotr Akimovich 304
Aleksei I, Tsar 199, 209, 214, 217
Aleppo 91, 139
Alexander the Great (of Macedonia) 15, 18, 19, 22–5
Alexander I, Tsar 258–9, 261–3, 266, 269–71, 273, 280
Alexander II, Tsar 289, 293, 296–301, 305–6
Alexander III, Tsar 306, 309–10
Alexander VI, Pope 163
Alexandria 39
Alexios I of Trebizond 116
Alexios II of Trebizond 145
Alexios III of Trebizond 146–7
Alexis Comnenus 116
Al'ftan, Gen Vladimir Alekseevich 313, 319
Ali bin Fadl of Ganja 79
Ali Quli Khan *see also* Adil 176–8
Aliev, Geidar 389
Alikhanashvili 346
Alikhanov, Maksud 312–14, 316, 346
Aliqan, noin 133
Algeti river 82, 172, 183, 193
Alkhazishvili, Gen. Iakov Kaikhosrovich 304
Alinjak 149–50
Alp Arslan 81–2

Althun, Davit VII's consort 130
Amadeus of Besançon 116
Amalrik, Andrei Alekseevich 375
Amasya 45, 136, 171, 174, 183, 192, 199, 240
Amazasp I 32
Amazasp II 34
Amazasp III 35–6
Amberd 112–13
Ambrogio, Father 192
Ambrosi, Patriarch 341–2, 374
America, ~n, USA 292, 302, 309, 325, 332, 335–6, 349, 361–2, 375, 386, 389, 391–2, 395–7
Ames, Aldrich 386
Amilakhvari, Demet're, Gen. 361
Amilakhvari, Ivane 312
Amir Mihran 112–3
Amirejibi, Richard 334
Amirgune of Erevan 194
Amnesty International 374, 380
Amur-Darya *see* Oxus
Ana Qaplanishvili, wife of Davit II of Kakhetia 252, 258
Ana, 1st wife of Teimuraz I 187, 189
Ana, 2nd wife of Teimuraz II 233
Anakopia 56–8, 73, 76–8, 82, 158
Anania of Dvin 103
Ananuri 199
Anast'asia, daughter of Erek'le II 272
Anastasius, Emperor 47
Anatolia, ~n 11, 12, 15–18, 20–21, 24–6, 29, 66, 68, 71, 83, 86, 93, 119, 132, 139, 145, 147, 150, 158, 165, 181, 183, 251, 266, 274, 300, 304, 321, 326, 380
Ancha 77, 142
Anchba 48, 53, 61, 75
Anchiskhat'i 262
Andrea of Mingrelia 197
Andrew, St 39
Andronicus I Comnenus, Emperor 116
Andronik'ashvili, K'ot'e 345
Andronik'ashvili, Malkhaz 270
Andronike Comnenus of Trebizond 145
Andronik'e Jojik' 76
Andronikov, Ivan Malkhazovich 288, 292–3
Andropov, Iuri Vladimirovich 376–7
Angiolello, Giovan-Maria 159
Ani 70, 79–81, 93, 96, 99–104, 113, 115, 119, 121, 124, 127, 135, 152–3
Anik'a Abashidze, wife of Simon I of Imeretia 220
Aniketes 28
Anna, Tsarina 235
Anna, wife of Bagrat' V 146–7
Anna Khutlu of Trebizond 145
Annunzio, Gabriele d' 334
Anos (Anchba) 48
Ansellus of Jerusalem 91
Antim the Iberian 224
Antioch 23, 31, 45, 73, 80, 88, 154–6, 159–60
Antioch III (Seleucid) 24
Antioch of Commagena 31
Ant'on Glonistavisdze 108, 110, 114, 116
Ant'on I 'the Great' Catholicos 234, 236, 244–5, 252, 254
Ant'on II Catholicos 260, 262, 269, 272
Ant'on Saghirisdze 107
Antoninus Pius 34–5
Antonio, Father Don 292
Ant'onovi, Zurab 290
Anuk'a, daughte of Vakht'ang V 211
Anuk'a, daughte of Vakht'ang VI 229
Anushirvan, Ilkhan 145
Apirat of Ani 103
Apkhazi, K'ot'e 343
Apollinaire, Guillaume 335
Apridon, Gd Duke 105, 107
Aps(h)il *see* Abkhaz
Arab, ~ia, ~ic 5, 19, 50, 53–69, 71–5, 78, 86, 89, 91, 94–6, 99, 100, 109, 111, 114, 139, 151, 165, 275
Aragats, Mt 96
Aragvi, river 18, 22–4, 26, 59, 140–42, 148, 162, 184, 186, 188, 191–2, 197, 199, 210, 212, 231–3, 242, 256, 263, 267, 288
Aragvisp'ireli (Dedabrishvili), Shio 307
Aramaic 19, 23–4, 32–4
Aramon, Baron d' 170
Araxes, river 24, 30, 68, 89, 112, 115, 120, 255
Archaeopolis *see* Nokalakevi
Archelaios, King 28
Archil I 42
Archil, King of Kakhetia, then Imeretia 211–13, 215–20, 223, 227–9
Archil, St 55–9
Archil Mukhranbat'oni 172, 176
Ardabil 115, 120, 187
Ardahan (Art'aani) 170, 305, 326, 337, 340, 361
Ardashir, King 35
Ardeti 161
Ardzinba, Vladislav 380, 383–4, 391
Arghun Agha 126–7, 129–31, 135–7
Argishti, King 16, 17
Argonauts 13

Argveti 25, 42, 44, 47, 57, 62–3, 66, 70, 80, 139, 162
Aristarchos of Colchis 27
Aristoboulos of Armenia 31
Aristoboulos of Judaea 27
Aristophanes 19
Arkhot'i 322
Armaz 12, 18, 23
Armazi, Armaztsikhe 23, 25, 31–2, 35
Armenia, ~n 7–8, 12–13, 15–16, 20, 22, 23–36, 38–42, 45–7, 49–53, 55–68, 70–81, 83, 89, 91–4, 99, 101–4, 109–10, 112–13, 115, 119, 120–21, 123–4, 126–30, 134–6, 138, 141, 145–6, 149–50, 154–5, 158, 165, 171, 179, 182, 188, 198, 207, 225, 227, 233–4, 236–8, 245–6, 253, 255, 257, 259–60, 267, 269–70, 272–4, 278–9, 284–5, 290–94, 297–300, 302–4, 307, 311–14, 316–21, 323–7, 330–31, 334–6, 340, 352, 361, 372, 378, 382–3, 387, 389–91, 393, 395, 399
Arran *see* Albania, Caucasian
Arrian(us), Lucius Flavius 14, 33–4
Arsena, Bishop of Tbilisi 272
Arsena of Ch'qondidi 126
Arsena of Iqalto 88, 93, 96
Arseni III Catholicos 121
Arshak I 25
Arshak II 29, 41
Arsharunik 99
Arslan, Emir 103
Arslan Shah, Sultan 103
Art'aani *see* Ardahan
Artaban III 30
Artaban IV 35
Artag, King 25–7
Art'anuji (Ardanuç) 44, 46, 65–7, 69, 83, 170
Artashes (Zenon) I 30
Artashir IV 41
Artavasdes of Armenia 25
Artavaz 44
Artaxata 30
Artaxerxes 20
Artaxias *see* Arshak
Art'emidze, Evgeni 361
Art'emon, Archimandrite 209
Artoces *see* Artag
Artvin 68–9, 326, 337, 340, 361
Arutinian, Ioseb 246
Asandros 28
Asatiani, Temur 392
Ashdod 373
Ashordia, Solomon 319
Ashot' II of T'ao 68
Ashot' III 'the Blind' 64
Ashot' k'ukhi 67, 77
Ashot the Great, St 57, 64–5, 59, 67, 118
Ashot' son of Guaram mampali 66
Ashot III of Shirak 67, 71
Ashotan Mukhranbat'oni 178
Ashraf Azeri 145
Aslan Bey 266
Aslan Paşa 217
Aspindza 67, 194, 222, 243
Aspagur I 35–6
Assyria, ~n 11–12, 15, 16–18
Astarabad 210
Astrakhan 148, 173, 223, 226–7, 238, 244–5
Atarbekov, Georgi Aleksandrovich 348
Atatürk 336
At'eni 78, 85, 165, 170
Athens 20
Athos 64, 68–9, 73, 77, 108, 162, 274
Atraka *see* Otrok
Atrapatakan *see* Azerbaijan
Atrnerse, Persian general 46
Ats'quri 39, 88, 108, 154, 156, 160–62, 169, 243
Audincourt 346
Augustinians 192
Augustus, Emperor 29
Austerlitz 266
Austria, ~n, Austro-Hungary 170, 232, 246, 251, 271, 320–22
Avalishvili, Zurab 328
Avars 52, 172–3, 177–8, 182, 231, 237–8, 273
Avestan 20
Avgoroz Bandais-dze 145
Avignon 145
Ayub(id) 111, 113, 115
Aza Khutlu of Trebizond 145
Azat Khan 237
Azerbaijan, Azeri 7–8, 12, 16, 50, 60–61, 67, 70, 86, 98–100, 102–4, 112–13, 115, 118–20, 122, 124–5, 129, 131, 141, 145, 148–9, 152–3, 162, 164, 166, 171, 176–7, 179, 194, 226, 233, 238, 245–6, 254, 260, 263, 275, 278, 280, 284, 291, 294, 302, 313–14, 317, 323–4, 327, 330–31, 334–5, 337, 340, 345, 349, 359–60, 371–2, 378, 389–90, 394–5
Azon 22–3
Azov 26, 28, 228, 235

Babak Khorramdin 60
Babylon 18
Baeghatyr of Ossetia 134

Bagapsh, Sergei 394
Bagavan 121
Baghdad 55–60, 65, 72, 112, 124, 129, 135, 138, 148, 150, 167, 193–4
Baghdati 199
Baghvash, Ivane 79–81
Baghvash, Lip'arit' IV 63, 66, 72, 77, 80
Baghvash, Lip'arit' V 82, 85–6, 108
Baghvash, Niania 79–80
Baghvash, Rat'i 70, 73, 86
Bagrat' III 61–2, 69–75
Bagrat' IV 76–82, 88
Bagrat' V 'the Great' 146–8, 153
Bagrat' VI, earlier II of Imeretia 158–61
Bagrat' VII (Bagrat'-Khan) 191, 193
Bagrat' I of Abkhazia 63, 66–7
Bagrat' I of Imeretia 140
Bagrat' III of Imeretia 165–71
Bagrat' IV 'the Blind' of Imeretia 194, 208, 214–18
Bagrat' I kouropalates 65
Bagrat' II regveni 67–71
Bagrat', brother of Teodosi III of Abkhazia 64
Bagrat' of K'larjeti (son of murdered Sumbat') 74
Bagrat' Mukhranbat'oni 165–6, 172, 176
Bagrat', nephew of Aleksandre II of Kakhetia 187
Bagrat', nephew of Giorgi II of Imeretia 180
Bagrat', son of Davit XI 177
Bagrat', son of Giorgi II of Imeretia 175
Bagrat', son of Giorgi XI 212
Bagrat', son of K'onst'ant'ine I 153
Bagration, Lieutenant 268
Bagration, Piotr Ivanovich 271
Bagrat'ioni, Aleksandre 223–4, 228–9, 231
Bagrat'ioni, Irak'li 359
Bagrat'ioni, P'et're 356, 363
Bagration-Mukhransky, Gen. Aleksandr Iraklievich 307
Bahram Chobin 51
Baidu Khan 137
Bakar I (Shah Navaz Khan) of Kartli 222, 224–6
Bakar II, son of Vakht'ang VI 227, 229, 232
Baker, James 386–7, 392
Bakht'rioni 210
Bakradze, Valenin 367
Baku 32, 90, 232, 259, 267, 287, 298, 302, 309–10, 313, 315, 325–6, 328, 330–32, 336, 338, 340–41, 346, 356–7, 359–60, 370, 388, 390, 395, 399
Bakur I 35
Bakur II 51
Bakur III 51
Bakuriani, Grigol 83, 88
Balanchivadze, Tina
Balash, Shah 47
Balendukht', Queen 44, 51
Balfour, Arthur 331
Balkans 12
Balkar 359–60
Baltic 173, 332, 335, 374, 387, 398
Ban Ki-Moon 398
Bana Cathedral 76–7
Bandza 213
Baramidze, Giorgi 394
Baratashvili 159–60, 162, 172, 183
Baratashvili, Kaikhosro 194
Baratashvili, Shadiman 189–90
Baratashvili, Sachino 172
Barbaro, Giosafat 159–60
Barbieri 289
Bardas Phocas 68, 76
Bardas Skliros 62, 68
Barda(VI), 16, 44, 89, 92, 112, 134, 193, 198, 223
Bardzim Amilakhori 173, 176
Bardzim of Aragvi 232
Bariatinsky, Aleksandr Ivanovich 293–300
Barings Bank 296
Barnukisdze, Sergi 56
Bartam, son of Kavad I 47
Barzabod 42–3, 46
Basegh of Ani 103
Basiani 75, 109, 114
Basil II, Emperor 68, 70–71, 74–6
Basil, son of Bagrat' III
Basil of Ch'qondidi 135, 142
Batsbi 92
Batu Khan 126
Batulia Dadiani 175
Batumi 19, 159–60, 192, 194, 228, 246, 252, 274, 302, 304–5, 307, 309–10, 312–13, 321, 324–9, 331–2, 334–9, 357, 370, 376, 379, 384, 389, 392–3, 395
Baudouin I of Jerusalem 91
Baudouin II of Jerusalem 94
Baudouin IV of Jerusalem 108
Bazaleti 196–7
Beach, Gen. William 332
Bebutov, Vasili Osipovich 293
Bedia (Bishopric) 74–5, 92–3, 144, 159
Bedia, Eduard 352
Behring Straits 368
Beibar, Sultan 132, 138

Belakani 225, 251, 263
Belaknis Ts'qali 187
Belarus' 340, 355, 365, 395
Belgium 351
Belgorod 262
Belgrade 235
Bendukidze, K'akha 392–5
Berbich'ashvili, Gigla 316
Berdichev 247
Beria, Ana 351
Beria, Lavrent'i 336, 339, 341–2, 344–70, 374, 377
Beria-Jaqeli, Marta 351, 368
Berishvili, Mamia 363
Berishvili, Shalik'o 356–8, 363
Berke Khan 131, 133–4
Berlin 305, 320, 327–8, 335, 346, 356–7, 359, 369
Besarion, Catholicos of Imeretia 241–2
Besik'i (Gabashvili, Besarion) 245, 252, 254
Bessas 49
Beyazit Ildirim, Sultan 151
Beylagan 152
Bezhan I Dadiani 230, 234
Bijnis 112–13, 123
Binkaran 44
Birkin, Russian envoy 182
Birtvisi 77, 151, 168
Black Sea 7, 13, 15, 17–18, 20, 24, 35–6, 40, 42, 45, 49, 61–2, 65, 76, 83, 92–3, 98, 113, 115, 123, 133, 145, 158, 163, 170, 174, 189, 191–2, 195, 228, 243, 251, 259, 266, 271, 275, 278, 279, 285, 289 292–4, 298, 302, 205, 326, 329, 331–2, 334, 337–8, 360, 362, 371, 375, 384, 386, 389, 396–7
Bliukher, Vasili Konstantinovich 355, 366
Blum, Léon 362
Bodoji 78
Bogoliubsky, Iuri Andreevich 109–12
Bogoliubsky, Vsevolod Iur'evich 109
Bok'eria, Giga 390
Bolnisi 46, 124, 191, 360
Bolshevik 289, 310, 315–16, 318, 324–7, 329–40, 342, 344, 346, 348–50, 352, 355
Boniface VIII, Pope 138
Borchalo 340
Borena, Queen 77, 79, 82
Boris Godunov, Tsar 184–6
Borjomi 167, 289, 291, 304–5, 326, 337
Borozdin, Kornili Aleksandrovich 306
Bosphorus (Azov), 26, 28
Botso of Samtskhe 111
Boutros-Ghali, Boutros 383
Brest-Litovsk 326, 329
Brezhnev, Leonid Il'ich 371–2
Briand, Aristide 338
Briggs, Gen. Harold Rawdon 332
Britain, British 16, 23, 47, 228, 267, 277, 281, 285, 288, 292–4, 298, 302, 317, 325–8, 330–37, 345, 353, 356, 361, 367, 375, 382, 386
Brosset, Marie-Félicité 269, 288
Brusilov, Col. Aleksei Nikolaevich 285
Brussels 320, 395
Bryza, Matthew 395
Bucharest 397
Buddhist 94
Bugha, Emir 135–6
Bugha al-Kabir (the Turk) 58–62, 66, 72
Bughadze, Lasha 400
Bulgaria, ~n 12, 53, 62, 68, 75, 88, 320, 330
Burdukhan, wife of Giorgi III 101, 105
Burjanadze, Nino 387, 392–3
Burnashov, Col. Stepan Danilovich 246, 251–3
Bursa 158
Bush, George sr 386–7
Bush, George W. 391
Buturlin, Ivan Mikhailovich 184, 187
Byzantine, Byzantium 8, 23, 36, 38–56, 58–68, 71, 75–83, 85, 88–90, 94, 103, 109–10, 113, 115–16, 132–3, 145, 157, 170, 359
Bzyb river 300, 326

Caesar, Gaius Julius 28
Cairo 132, 139, 362
Caligula 30
Calixtus III, Pope 157
Callias of Athens 20
Canaris, Adm. Wilhelm 359
Cappadocia 18, 28, 33
Capuchin 211, 213, 242, 265
Carpini, Plano 127
Carus, Emperor 35
Casement, Roger 340
Casperius 31
Caspian Sea 13, 17, 22, 26, 33, 43, 90–91, 93, 98, 102, 115–16, 119–20, 134, 163, 172–3, 181, 210, 225, 227, 251, 256, 259, 263, 267, 272, 280, 289, 296, 302, 332, 390
Cassius Dio 25, 29, 34
Castella 275, 277
Catherine II, Empress 238, 241–4, 246, 250–51, 255–6, 258
Çelebi, Evliya 195–6
Ceyhan 388, 390
Chachba *see* Shervashidze

Chaghatai 125–6
Chalcedon 52
Ch'ant'uria, Gia 377, 380, 386
Ch'anuqvadze, P'armen 347–8
Ch'ar-Belakani 251, 263
Chardin, Jean 189, 200, 208, 215–16
Chark'viani, K'andid 355–6, 361, 364–5
Chark'viani, Krist'epore 355
Charles X of France 158
Ch'avch'avadze, Aleksandre 262
Ch'avch'avadze, Ana 292
Ch'avch'avadze, Ek'aterina 289, 293, 296–7
Ch'avch'avadze, Garsevan 250, 254, 256, 260, 262
Ch'avch'avadze, Iason 288
Ch'avch'avadze, Ilia 303, 307, 310, 316–18, 379
Ch'avch'avadze, Nik'o 301–2
Ch'avch'avadze, Nina 320
Ch'avch'avadze-Griboedova, Nino 280, 297
Ch'avch'avadze, Zakare 312
Chechen, Chechnya 23–5, 27, 44, 46, 92, 116, 123–4, 140, 242–3, 284, 294, 298–9, 342, 359–60, 383–4, 386–8, 390–91, 397
Cheka ([O]GPU, NKVD, [N]KGB) 316–17, 335, 338–42, 344–6, 348, 350, 352–5, 357–8, 360, 364, 366–70, 373–8, 382, 390–91, 394
Chernomyrdin, Viktor Stepanovich 387
Chernyshev, Gen. Aleksandr Ivanovich 284, 286
Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Gavrilovich 306
Chevalier, Abel 337
Ch'iaberi 110
Ch'iatura 319, 329, 344
Chicherin, Georgi Vasil'evich 337
Chijavadze, K'akha 146
Chikobava, Arnold 351
Chikhladze, Teodore 377
Chikhori 158, 235
Ch'iladze, Darejan 195, 207, 213
Ch'iladze, Javakh 175
China, Chinese 26, 71, 120 151–2, 234, 288, 388
Chingiz Khan 120, 122, 125, 135, 146
Chirac, Jacques 389, 392
Chit'adze Shio 314
Chkheidzes 180
Chkheidze, Davit 346
Chkheidze, K'arlo 319, 321, 323, 326, 332, 346
Chkheidze, Khopilandre 169
Chkheidze, Sekhnia 216
Chkheidze, Svimon 218
Chkhenk'eli, Ak'ak'i 323–4, 326–8, 331, 335, 362
Chkherimela 244
Choban, Emir 139–40
Chobanids 141, 145
Choloqashvili 189
Choloqashvili, Garsevan 165
Choloqashvili, Kaikhosro *see* Kakutsa
Chorasmia, ~n 115, 119–24, 148
Chormaghan 125
Chosroids 36, 65
Ch'qondidi 62, 64, 82, 84, 86, 88–90, 92, 108, 126, 135, 142, 144, 229–30
Chubinashvili, Davit 296
Ch'uch'unia(shvili), Vakht'ang 215–17
Chudetsky, Pavel Ivanovich 309
Chupalav, Shamkhal 184, 187
Churchill, Winston 331–2, 334
Chrysostom, St John 38, 86, 161
Çıldır 179, 194, 244, 253–4
Çıldır, Lake 17, 75, 176
Cimmerian 17, 18
Circassia, ~n 16–17, 27, 62, 64, 167, 173–5, 181–2, 198, 208, 219, 223, 228, 234, 236, 242, 245, 268, 275, 300, 359
Claudius, Emperor 30
Clavijo, Ruy Gonzalez 152
Clement XI, Pope 224
Clinton, Bill 386, 389
Colby, Bainbridge 332
Colchian, Colchis (Egrisi) 11–21, 23–9, 32–6, 38, 40, 44–7, 53, 59–62, 64, 70–71, 73, 84
Constantine (Anchba) 53
Constantine I, arkhon of Lazica 56
Constantine I, Emperor 32, 36, 38, 40
Constantine VII, Emperor 64
Constantine VIII, Emperor 71, 76
Constantine IX Monomachos 76
Constantine X, Emperor 81, 157
Constantine Doukas 81
Constantinople (Istanbul) 36, 38–40, 42–3, 45–6, 48–51, 53, 56, 62–4, 66, 69, 74, 76–7, 79–81, 85, 88–90, 110, 114–16, 133, 141, 153, 157, 163, 167–8, 174, 177, 181–3, 194, 196–7, 213, 227–8, 230, 234, 237, 241–2, 244–6, 252, 287, 291, 298, 308, 320, 332, 338, 357–8
Contarini, Ambrosio 159–60
Cooke-Collis, Gen. James 331–2, 334
Corbulo, Gnaeus Domitius 28, 31
Çoruh, river 7, 13, 16–18, 21, 24, 26, 28, 33, 45, 61, 65, 68, 170, 228
Cossack 173, 189, 192, 207–9, 228, 236, 263, 269, 272, 274, 285–6, 296–7, 299–300, 311, 313–14, 316–17, 325, 332, 383

Crassus, Marcus Lienius 29
Crassus, Publius Canidius 29
Crimean, ~n 173–4, 176, 182, 188, 243–4, 246, 253–4, 268, 288, 290–93, 300, 309, 330, 358, 381
Crusade, ~r 86, 89–92, 94, 108, 114, 116, 119, 121–2, 157–8
Csészényi, Irma 290
Ctesiphon 40, 53
Curzon, Lord George 331, 334
Cyprus 88
Cyrus, King 18
Czech 12
Czechoslovak, ~ia 345, 379

Dachi, King 44, 51
Dachi, Duke of Kakhetia 59
Dadeshkeliani 282, 297
Dadeshkeliani, Jansugh 297
Dadeshkeliani, K'onst'ant'ine 289, 297–8
Dadeshkeliani, Mosest'ro 341
Dadeshkeliani, Nik'oloz 289, 297
Dadiani, Aleksandr Leonovich 283
Dadiani, Grigol, Bishop 307
Dadiani, Prince Pavle 312
Dagestan, ~i 12, 44, 60, 87, 116, 138, 166, 172–3, 187, 190–91, 197, 199, 222–3, 225, 231, 233, 237–8, 242–3, 246, 251–5, 258, 261, 263, 267–8, 273, 275, 284–5, 290, 292–4, 298–9, 312–13, 378, 390
Damascus 57, 86, 124, 177
Damietta 119
Danilov, Musketeer 182
Dante 348
Danton, Georges 297
Danube 36, 158, 243–4, 275, 279, 289
Darash 50
Darejan 'the Devious', daughter of Teimuraz I 192, 198, 210, 214–17
Darejan, wife of Giorgi III Dadiani 217
Darejan, 2nd wife of Erek'le II 254, 257, 259–62
Darejan, wife of Solomon I 270
Dargo 290
Daryal Pass 17, 24–5, 32–3, 59, 63, 82, 90–91, 123, 137, 150, 243, 256, 258, 262–3, 267, 272, 285, 294, 300, 318, 375, 399
Dashnak 323, 365
Datuna of Aragvi 199
Daud-Khan *see* Davit XI
Daud Khan of Ganja
Daud-Khan of Karabagh 198
David, Bishop of Ani 121
David Comnenus 116
Davit I kuropalates 66, 85
Davit II magistros 67, 85
Davit III 'the Great' of T'ao 60, 63, 68–71, 74–6, 85, 103
Davit IV 'the Builder' 83–98, 108, 110, 162, 180, 254, 392
Davit V 100–1
Davit VI Narin 117, 121–2, 125–6, 128–30, 132–4, 136–7
Davit VII Ulu 118, 125, 128–31, 133–5
Davit VIII 137–9
Davit IX 145–6
Davit X of Kartli 162, 164–7
Davit XI (Daud-Khan) of Kartli 172–3, 176–7, 191, 193, 198
Davit XII (uncrowned) 254–5, 257–60, 262
Davit II (Davit Giorgis-dze) of Imeretia 251–2, 257–8, 263
Davit I of Kakhetia 178, 181–2, 184, 187
Davit II (Imam Quli Khan) of Kakhetia 213, 223
Davit II Catholicos 146–7, 152
Davit III Catholicos 156
Davit V Patriarch 374
Davit Archilis-dze *see* Solomon II
Davit Chorepiscopos 74
Davit Dadiani 276, 289, 294
Davit Garesja monastery 101, 108, 110, 142, 234, 374–5
Davit Giorgis-dze *see* Davit II of Imeretia
Davit Gurieli 282
Davit Nemsadze, Catholicos of Imeretia 220
Davit of Lore 78
Davit, son of Aleksandre I 153
Davit, son of Giorgi X 183
Davit, son of Levan I of Kakhetia 173
Davit, son of Teimuraz I 200
Davit Soslan 110–16
Dedisimedi, wife of Qvarqvare II Jaqeli 160
Dedisimedi, mother of Qvarqvare IV Jaqeli 175–6
Deiotar of Paphlagonia 27–8
Dekanozov, Vladimir Georgievich 367
Deli Mahmed Khan 188, 190
Demet're I 92, 96, 98–101, 107
Demet're II *see* Dimit'ri
Demet're II of Abkhazia 59, 62–3
Demet're III of Abkhazia 61, 63–4, 66
Demet're Gurieli 214–15, 217
Demet're, son of Aleksandre I 153, 155–7
Demet're, son of Aleksandre I of Kakhetia 164–5

Demet're, son of Giorgi I & Alde 76–8
Demet're, son of Guaram I 54
Demet're K'larji, son of murdered Gurgen 75, 77
Demetrius (Anchba) 53
Demna, son of Davit V 101, 103–5
Demonakt of Parthia 30
Denikin, Gen. Anton Ivanovich 326, 331–2, 334
Derbent 58, 93, 96, 98, 102, 120, 133, 226, 232, 236
Devdariani, Seit 343
Diaz de Auxse, Martin 163
Didgori 92–3, 98, 113
Dido 116, 199
Digaestos 49
Dighomi 78, 172
Dimit'ri II 'the Self-Sacrificing', St 135–7, 141, 144
Dimit'ri, grandson of Erek'le II 281–2
Dinar, Queen of Hereti 60–62
Dionise, Catholicos 165
Dionisio, Capuchin 242
Dioscourias *see* Sukhumi
Div-Sultan Rumlu 165–6
Diyarbekir 102, 124, 178, 193
Dmanisi 73, 82, 98–9, 103, 134, 160, 176–7, 179, 187, 233
Dnepr river 189
Dnestr river 254
Dodashvili, Solomon 281–2
Domenico, Father 246
Dоment'i II Catholicos 210
Dоment'i III Catholicos 223–4, 227, 229, 235
Dominican 126, 140
Domitian, Emperor 31
Domnisi 142
Don river 189, 209, 228, 284
Dondukov-Korsakov, Aleksandr Mikhailovich 306, 308
Dorgolel, King 77, 82
Dosite, bishop of Kutaisi 276
Drançay, Anne 292
Drancy 362
Dranda monastery 207
Dresden 299
Dubois de Montpéreux, Frédéric 285
Dudaev, Gen. Jokhar 382
Dukhobor 318, 365
Dulandukht', wife of Aleksandre I 153
Dumas, Alexandre 298
Dumbadze, Gen. Roman 393
Dusheti 316, 320, 336
Dutch *see* Netherlands
Dvals 140, 150
Dvin 51–2, 58–9, 82, 94, 99, 103, 109, 112–13, 122
Dzagan Abuletisdze 84, 86
Dzegvi castle 172
Dzierżyński, Felix 336, 340
Dzindzibadze 346
Dzurdzuk *see* Chechen

Echmiadzin 299
Edirne *see* Adrianopolis
Egarslan Bakurtsikheli 127–8
Egrisi *see* Colchis
Egypt, ~ian 17, 19, 24, 28, 39–40, 75, 91, 95, 111, 128–9, 132, 136, 138–9, 141, 150, 152, 163, 165, 168, 253, 257, 270, 282
Ek'aterine Dadiani *see* Ek'aterina Ch'avch'avadze
Ekvtime, Archbishop 212
Ekvtime Atoneli 69
Ekvtime, Bishop of Gelati 276
Elbruz 359
Elchin, Fedot 207
Eldigüz *see* Shams ad-Din Eldigüz
Elene, daughter of Davit I of Kakhetia 184
Elene (Lela), daughter of Giorgi X 185–6
Elene, daughter of Giorgi II of Kakhetia 185
Elene Diasamidze, mother of Erek'le I 211
Elene, wife of Davit XII 260, 262
Elene, wife of Giorgi II 84
Elene, wife of Giorgi II of Kakhetia 165
Elene, wife of Manuchar II Jaqeli 179, 188
Elevteri, Archimandrite 273
Eliava, Gogi 351, 353
Eliozashvili 237
Elizbar of Alaverdi 210
Elizbar of Ksani 173, 176
Elizbar jr of Ksani 245
Elizbarashvili, Qaraman 280
El-Mirza, son of Levan I of Kakhetia 173
England, English 11, 95, 182, 194, 196, 223, 238, 251, 280, 287, 288, 333, 394
Enukidze, Abel 337–8, 355
Enver Pasha 321, 326
Ep'ipane, Catholicos 119
Erek'le I (Nazar-Ali Khan) of Kakhetia, then Kartli 209–19, 223, 225, 227–8
Erek'le II 44, 225, 232–4, 236–60, 262–3, 265, 268, 272, 280, 282
Erek'le Mukhranbat'oni 212
Erek'le, son of Aleksandre II of Kakhetia 176
Erevan 96, 99, 184, 186, 191, 193–4, 224–6,

232–3, 245, 255–6, 263, 268, 270, 282–3, 304, 327, 392
Ergneti 378
Eristavi, Davit 308
Eristavi, Giorgi 290, 292
Ermolov, Gen. Aleksei Petrovich 274–8, 284, 286, 290, 319
Erts'ukhi 86
Ervand Gushnasp 50
Erzincan 114, 126, 164
Erzurum 24, 67–8, 83, 99–102, 109, 111–14, 119, 121, 124, 127, 133, 152, 162, 168–70, 174, 177–8, 184, 191, 196, 218, 226, 230, 321, 326
Esai Jalalian, Patriarch of Ganja 225
Eudoxia, Empress 38, 42
Eugenius IV, Pope 155
Euphrates, governor of Abkhaz 48
Euphrates river 68, 164–5, 277
Euripides 29
Eusebius 39
Eutropius 25
Evagrus the Iberian 40
Evdemoz I Diasamidze, Catholicos 200
Evdemoz II, Catholicos of Imeretia 174
Evst'at'i, St 24
Ezhov, Nikolai Ivanovich 352, 354–5
Ezra of Ancha 77

Fabianus, consul 34
Fabre, Jean-Baptiste 224
Fadl I, emir of Arran 74, 81–2
Fadl of Ani 99, 100
Fakhr ad-Din Shaddad 100
False Dmitri I 186
Fariburz of Shirvan 83
Farik, al- (historian) 100
Fars 196, 198
Farsi 8, 280
Fat'h Ali 245, 251, 253, 267, 273
Fekla *see* Tekla
Feleki of Shirvan 101
Feofilakt, Exarch of Imeretia 276–7
Ferdinand II of Aragon 163
Fereidan, ~i 373, 389
Feriköy 287, 308
Ferrara 155
Figner, Vera Nikolaevna 306
Filaret Varazhnun 83
Finckenstein 267
Finland 317, 335–6, 394
Fiodor II, Tsar 182
Fiodor, son of Boris Godunov 184
Fiume *see* Rijeka
Florence 140, 155, 158, 163
Fontainebleau 362
Forestier-Walker, Gen. George Ferdinand 3rd 332
France, French 95, 170, 208, 223–4, 235, 238, 247, 251, 267–8, 271, 275–7, 279–80, 282, 287, 292–4, 298, 308–9, 320, 325, 327, 330–31, 333, 336–8, 342, 345–8, 356–9, 361–2, 364, 375, 386, 389, 393
Franciscan 140
Frederick II, Emperor 119, 121–2
Frederick III, Emperor 158
Frederick of Sicily 122

Gabashvili, Besarion *see* Besik'i
Gabashvili, Gen. Vasil 321
Gabashvili, T'imotei 235
Gabashvili, Zakar 245
Gabba, Col. Melchiade 332–3
Gabulots, Emir 66
Gagarin, Prince Aleksandr Ivanovich 297
Gagi (Aghjaqala) 82, 102, 125–7, 167, 210
Gagik I of Armenia 74–5
Gagik of Kakhetia 78
Gagra 130, 376, 383
Gaikhatu, Ilkhan 137
Galanus 140
Gali 389
Galoni, archbishop of Paris 91
Gamba, Jacques-François 277, 280
Gamqrelidze, Tamaz 379
Gamrek'eli, Varaz-Bakur 81
Gamsakhurdia, K'onst'ant'ine 340, 345, 348, 353, 368–70, 374, 376
Gamsakhurdia, Zviad 374–84, 391, 393
Ganja 78–9, 82, 86–7, 92, 94, 98–100, 102, 113, 118–22, 125, 152, 171–2, 190, 196, 212, 226, 231–2, 237, 240, 245, 253, 256, 263, 265, 278
Gardabani 61, 65
Gardane, Gen. Charle-Mattheu, Comte de 267
Garesja *see* Davit Garesja
Gargar 94
Garisi 171
Garni(si) 99, 122–3, 145
Gasviani, Lidia 353
Gats'qvet'ila 210
Gaulle, Charles de 358, 361
Gedevan, Bishop of Gelati 235
Gedevanishvili, Gen. Aleksandre 328
Gegech'k'ori, Aleksandre 339, 342, 349
Gegech'k'ori, Evgeni 324, 331, 335, 346, 348,

356, 359, 362, 369
Gegech'k'ori-Beria, Nina 339, 358, 362
Gegelia, Grigol 347–8, 364
Gegenava, Gabriel 207
Geguti 111, 115, 190, 234
Gekker, Anatoli Il'ich 336
Gelakun 113
Gelati 9, 87–8, 96, 100, 116–17, 137, 142, 144, 148, 152, 164, 169, 174, 208, 216–17, 234–5, 240–41, 254, 258, 274, 276, 296, 337, 353, 374, 392
Gelbakhiani, P'et're 372
Gelbakhiani, P'et're jr 372
Gelovani (Svanetia) 159
Geneva 311, 320
Genoa, Genoese 140–41, 341, 374
Georgievsk 250, 255, 260, 376
Gerasun 21
Gerbert, archbishop of Paris 91
German, ~y 93, 261, 267–8, 275, 279, 284, 286, 288, 302, 307, 320–21, 323, 325–31, 335, 345–6, 348, 353, 356–63, 366, 369, 382, 386, 398
Gershel'man, Fiodor Konstantinovich 308
Gestapo 359–60, 362
Ghado pass 127, 134
Ghalghur 132
Ghazan, Mahmud, Khan 137–8
Ghent 158
Ghoghoberidze, Bezhan 215
Giorgadze, Igor 387
Giorgi I 74–6, 110
Giorgi II 79, 82–5
Giorgi III 99–107, 110–11
Giorgi IV Lasha 110, 112, 116, 118–21, 128
Giorgi V 'the Brilliant' 136–7, 139–42, 144–5
Giorgi VI 'the Minor' 139
Giorgi VII 146, 148–52
Giorgi VIII, then I of Kakhetia 154–9, 161, 163
Giorgi IX 167
Giorgi X 182–8
Giorgi XI (Shahnavaz II) 211–13, 218–20, 222–3, 228
Giorgi XII 254–60, 268, 272, 281, 356
Giorgi I of Abkhazia 63
Giorgi II of Abkhazia 60–61, 63–4, 69, 88
Giorgi II of Imeretia 174–5, 178–80
Giorgi III of Imeretia 189–90, 194, 196–7, 199, 207
Giorgi VI (Abashidze) of Imeretia 219–21, 227–9
Giorgi VII of Imeretia 228–30
Giorgi VIII of Imeretia 236
Giorgi II 'Evil' of Kakhetia 165
Giorgi III Dadiani 170–71, 174–5
Giorgi IV (Lip'arit'iani) Dadiani 218–19, 229
Giorgi V Dadiani 241
Giorgi II Gurieli 174, 179
Giorgi III Gurieli 216–8
Giorgi IV Gurieli 230–31, 252
Giorgi Ch'qondideli 86, 88–9, 92
Giorgi Merchule 7, 62, 65
Giorgi Mtats'mindeli 77, 80, 82, 87
Giorgi, grandson of Teimuraz I 207–8
Giorgi, son of Aleksandre II of Kakhetia 181, 184–5
Giorgi, son of Solomon I 258, 267
Giorgi, son of K'onst'ant'ine I 153, 155
Giorgi, son of Levan I of Kakhetia 172–3
Giorgi of Rach'a 242
Gishi 89
Giustino, Father 212
Givi Amilakhori 232–3
Gladkov, Maj.-Gen. 370
Gobaz I 43
Gobaz II 48–9
Gobron, Mikael 61
'Gochia', Giorgi 220
Goderdzi pass 16, 18
Godogani 219
Gogebashvili, Iak'ob 303, 308
Goglidze, Sergo 367
Golden Horde 131–4, 138, 145–8
Golgotha 144
Golitsyn, Grigori Sergeevich 307, 311–12, 314
Golovin, Gen. Evgeni Aleksandrovich 284–6
Gombori 166
Gonio 28, 170, 179, 193
Gopanto 180
Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich 377–8, 381
Gori 78, 111, 130, 137, 141, 155, 159–60, 164, 166, 170–72, 176, 179–80, 182–3, 190, 196–200, 204, 226, 232, 236, 240, 244, 288, 302, 325, 331, 340, 342, 370, 380, 398
Gornea 30–31
Gostkowski, Jan 220
Goths 41, 43
Gourgenes, King 44, 47, 50
GPU *see* Cheka
Grachev, Gen. Pavel Sergeevich 387
Granada 163
Grangiero, Ludovico 192
Greece, Greek 11–24, 26–8, 31–6, 40–41, 43–4, 49, 53, 62, 69, 77–80, 88, 92, 94, 115, 136, 156–7, 181 196, 208, 210, 223, 237, 243, 246, 251, 268, 272, 284, 288, 300, 365

Gregory I, Pope 52
Gregory IX, Pope 125
Gregory, St the Illuminator 39, 42
Gremi 166, 190, 196, 211
Griaznov, Fiodor Fiodorovich 313, 315–16
Griboedov, Aleksandr Sergeevich 279, 289, 297
Grigol VI Dadiani 252, 258, 265–6
Grigol, brother of Levan V Dadiani 277
Grigol, Archimandrite 241
Grigol Bezhanidze, Catholicos of Imeretia 229, 235
Grigol, Bishop 155–6
Grigol, Duke of Kakhetia 59
Grigol Hamam of Hereti 60
Grigol Ioanes-dze 272
Grigol of Khandzta 65, 118
Grigol Mukhranbat'oni 288
Grigol of Surami 127
Grishashvili, Ioseb 353
Grozny 359, 382
Guaram I (Gurgen) 51–2
Guaram II 56
Guaram III 56–8, 64–5
Guaram mampali 63, 66
Gudauta 304, 383, 389
Gudiashvili, Lado 335
Gudovich, Gen. Ivan Vasil'evich 255–6, 267–8
Guillaume de Bois 116
Gulab prison 190
Gulag 353–4, 361, 365–6, 374–5, 377
Gulchara, daughter of Giorgi X 183, 190
Güldenstädt, Johann Anton 239
Guliakov, Gen. Vasili Semionovich 261
Gulkhan (Eudoxia), daughter of Davit IX 146
Gumbaridze, Givi 377–8
Guralidze 154
Guramishvili, Davit 226
Gurandukht', sister of Bagrat' IV 76, 79, 81
Gurandukht', mother of Bagrat' III 63, 69–70, 73–4
Gurandukht', Qipchaq 91, 96
Gurgani, Fakhr al-Din 103
Gurgen I of T'ao 66–7
Gurgen II *magistros* of T'ao 67, 69–71, 74
Gurgen of K'larjeti 74–5
Gurgen *see* Guaram I
Guria 158, 160, 162, 166–71, 174–5, 178–80, 190–92, 194–5, 197, 199, 207, 213–14, 216–18, 220, 227–31, 235–6, 239, 241, 243–4, 246, 254, 258, 263–4, 268, 270–72, 276–7, 282, 285, 288–9, 292–4, 296–7, 301, 207, 310–14, 319, 326, 342
Güyük Khan 126, 128
Guzan of T'ao 111
Gvantsa, Davit VII's 2nd wife 130, 135
Gvishiani, Mikheil 355, 361, 368
Gyēnos 15, 19

Habib ibn Maslama 55, 57
Hadrian, Emperor 14, 33
Hafiz Paşa 193
Haghia Sophia 69
Hague, The 318
Hahn, Pavel Vasil'evich 284–5, 287
Haifa 373
Hakim, al-, Sultan 75
Hamadan 103, 120
Hamid Bey *see* Shervashidze, Mikhail
Hanafism 148
Hanway, Jonas 233
Harald Hardrada 78
Harford Jones, Sir 267
Harriman, Averell 349
Hassan Bey of Shaki 166
Hasan Rumlu 169
Hassan Buzurg 145
Hassan Küchük 145
Havachichi 71
Havel, Václav 379
Hazaravukht 47
Hebrew 24, 279, 304
Heidelberg 320
Helena, Queen 44
Helena, bride of Bagrat' IV 77
Helena, wife of Bagrat' V 146
Helsinki 374, 377, 379
Heniochoi, Hennioch 16, 28, 33, 36
Hephthalite 43, 45–7
Heraclius, Emperor 52–3, 57
Herat 212
Herbert, Rt Hon. Sidney 288
Hereti 16, 45–6, 60–63, 71, 74–5, 78, 80, 86–7, 89, 127, 149, 162
Herodotus 12, 14, 16, 18–20
Herzen, Aleksandr Ivanovich 306
Hilarion, Father 274
Himmler, Heinrich 364
Hindenburg, Paul von 327
Hirzius, Dr 258
Hitler, Adolf 147, 151, 346, 353, 357–8, 361, 400
Hittite 11, 12, 13, 16–8
Hiyas ad-Din Sanjar 100
Holland *see* Netherlands

Homer 14
Hong Kong 71
Honolulu 375
Honorius III, Pope 119, 121–2
Hopa 49, 78, 175
Hormizd III 44
Hormizd IV 51
Hormuz 196
Hosein, Shah 213, 222–6
Hovane-Smbat of Shirak 75–6
Hrazdan river 122
Hulagu Khan 129–31, 133–5
Hundza 140
Hungarian, Hungary 11, 91, 158, 223–4, 246, 267, 275, 292, 320–31, 323, 366, 368, 370
Huns 42–4, 46, 49
Hurrite 12, 13, 17
Husrev Paşa 197
Hussein ibn-Kahtaba 59
Hussein Khan (Erevan) 268

Iak'ob, envoy of Levan I of Kakhetia 173
Ianovsky, Kirill Petrovich 307-8
Iaroslav II of Vladimir 128
Iaroslav of Suzdal 126
Iashvili, P'aolo 348, 353
Iaşi 254
Iberia, ~n (in Caucasus) 12–13, 15–16, 18–47, 50–54, 57–60, 62–5, 68–9, 74, 76, 78–80, 108, 158–9, 180–81, 214, 224, 310
Ibn al-Azraq 99
Ibn Bibi 114
Ibn Haukal 72
Ibrahim Paşa 227
Ibrahim Paşa of Akhaltsikhe 240
Iese I (Ali Quli Khan) of Kartli 222, 224–5, 230–31, 234
Iese of Aragvi 212
Iese Dadiani 229
Iese of Ksani 197, 199
Iese (Isa-Khan), son of Levan I of Kakhetia 173, 176, 180, 190
Ievlev, Aleksei 209
Ignati, Bishop of Trnovo 156
Ignatiev, Semion Denisovich 364
Ilia II, Patriarch 376, 378, 380, 382, 388, 392
Ilkhans 128, 132–4, 137–9, 141, 145
Imam Quli Khan *see also* Davit II of Kakhetia
Imam Quli Khan of Shiraz 189, 196
Imam Quli Khan of Shirvan 198
Imeretia, ~n 8, 62, 125, 127, 129, 132, 138–40, 148–50, 152–3, 155–6, 158–62, 164–9, 171, 174–82, 189–202, 206–21, 227–32, 234–6, 238–46, 249, 251–2, 254–5, 257–60, 263–5, 267, 269–74, 276–7, 279–80, 282, 285, 287, 289, 291–4, 296–8, 311–13, 341, 344–5, 360
Inauri, Gen. Aleksi 367, 369–71, 374–5, 377
India, ~n 26, 120, 140, 148, 210, 232, 281, 292, 319, 327, 332, 334
Indo-European 11, 13, 21
Inguri river 285, 293, 371, 384, 398–9
Ingush, ~etia 23, 360–61, 393, 398
Innocent XI, Pope 212
Ioane IV Catholicos 93
Ioane V Catholicos 110
Ioane VII Diasamidze Catholicos 212
Ioane of Alaverdi 165
Ioane Atoneli 69
Ioane Bandais-dze 139
Ioane Bat'onishvili 94
Ioane, Bishop of Tbilisi 155
Ioane Senekerim of Hereti 60
Ioane, son of St Archil 61
Ioane, son of Giorgi XII 250, 256, 269
Ioane Tornik'e 68
Iori, river 7, 22, 59, 78, 84, 90, 165, 176, 191, 198
Ioseb Dadiani 195, 213
Ioseb, Bishop of Tbilisi 212
Ioseb Bagrat'ioni, Bishop of Gelati, then Catholicos of Imeretia 241–2
Ioseliani, Jaba 373, 379–84, 387, 390
Ioseliani, P'lat'on 294, 296
Iovakime of Bedia 159
Iovane, Archbishop 39
Iqalto 88
Iran, ~ian *see also* Persia, ~n 8, 14–15, 17–18, 20, 22–5, 29–30, 33, 35–7, 43–6, 49–50, 53, 64, 90, 94, 99, 104, 112–15, 119, 122–5, 127–8, 137, 139, 147–8, 152–3, 159, 164–73, 175–82, 184–94, 196–9, 209–16, 222–7, 229, 231–4, 236–8, 240, 244–6, 251, 253, 255–7, 260–63, 266–8, 270, 272–5, 281, 284, 294, 355–6, 367, 373, 389, 394, 399
Iraq 112, 122, 124, 127, 141, 145, 147, 325, 368, 397–8
Irene Palaiologina of Trebizond 145
Irubakidze-Choloqashvili, Nik'oloz (Nicolas Erbachi) 196–7, 199, 203
Isa Khan *see* Iese
Isaak Comnenus 90
Isabella I of Castile 163
Isak-Beg, son of Iese I 233
Isani 107, 123
Isfahan 83, 188, 196, 201, 211–13, 220, 224, 226, 232, 254

Is'hak bin Ismail, Emir 59–60, 63, 66
Ishak Paşa 227, 231
Ishak Paşa of Çıldır 254
Ishkhani 68–9, 77, 144
Ishkhanik of Hereti 60, 62
Isidor, Bishop of Kiev 156
Iskander, son of Qara Yusuf 153
Iskender Paşa 170
Ismail I, Shah 164–7
Ismail ibn Shuab, Emir 65
Ismailite 127
Ispir 18
Istanbul *see* Constantinople
Italian, Italy 12
Iulon, son of Erek'le II 254–5, 257, 260, 262, 267–8, 281
Ivan III, Tsar 163
Ivan IV, Tsar 173
Ivan V, Tsar 218
Ivane Burseli 138
Ivane Gamrek'eli-Toreli 127
Ivane of Akhaltsikhe 114, 122
Ivane Toreli 114
Ivane Toreli jr 151
Ivanishvili, Bidzina 400
Ivanov, Russian envoy 184–6
Ivanov, Igor' Sergeevich 392
Iziaslav Mstislavovich 100

Jacques de Russan 125
Jadaros of Ossetia 91
Jafarov, Mammed Iusif 323
Jaffar I, Emir 61
Jaffar III bin Ali, Emir 77–8
Jaffar Paşa 183
Jalairid 141, 145, 149
Jalal ad-Din 120–24
Jamal ad-Din 292
Jandieri, Davit 190–91, 194
Janibeg Amilakhori 150
Janjghava *see* Tsanava
Japaridze, Lomkas 209
Jaqeli 108, 127, 137, 143, 145, 153, 200, 351
Jaqeli, Aghabugha 156
Jaqeli, Bahadur 162
Jaqeli, Beka 133, 136, 138–9, 141, 143
Jaqeli, Beka II *see* Safar Paşa of Çıldır
Jaqeli, Ivane II 151–3, 155
Jaqeli, Ivane-Qvarvare Tsikhisjvareli 125, 127
Jaqeli, Kaikhosro I 164
Jaqeli, Kaikhosro II 168–71, 175
Jaqeli, K'rava 108
Jaqeli, Manuchar I 161, 165
Jaqeli, Manuchar II (Mustafa Paşa) 176–9, 181, 183, 188
Jaqeli, Manuchar III 188
Jaqeli, Manuchar IV 194
Jaqeli, Mzech'abuk' the Great 164
Jaqeli, Natela 135
Jaqeli, Qvarqvare I, atabag 140, 146
Jaqeli, Qvarqvare II 156–62, 164
Jaqeli, Qvarqvare III 165–9
Jaqeli, Qvarqvare IV 175–7
Jaqeli, Sargis 128, 130–31, 133
Jaqeli, Tamar 159
Jarah ibn Abdullah, Al- 57
Jashi, Dimit'ri 317
Jason 13
Javakheti 13, 16–17, 25, 32, 51, 56, 63–4, 66–7, 76, 82, 90, 127, 130, 133, 139, 153, 167, 169–70, 200, 236, 331, 389
Javakhishvili 162
Javakhishvili, Mikeil 345, 353, 368
Jebe 120
Jehan Banu (Begum), wife of Simon II 193, 198
Jehan Shah 156
Jemshid, Shamkhal 172
Jerusalem 40, 47, 73, 79–80, 86, 88–9, 91, 94, 108–9, 111, 116–17, 119, 138–9, 154, 156–7, 159, 163, 168, 195, 207, 224, 275, 286, 300
Jew, ~ish 8, 24, 51
Jibladze, Silibist'ro 310
Jigda Khanum, Davit VII's 1st wife 130, 135
Jikhask'ari 384
Jikia, Volodia 351, 353
Johannes of Florence 140
John I of Trebizond 133
John IV of Trebizond 153, 164
John XXII, Pope 139, 141
John Paul II, Pope 388
Jorbenadze, Givi 369
Jo(rj)iashvili, Arsena 315
Joseph of Tbilisi 130
Josephus, Titus Flavius 28
Juansher (chronicler) 43–5, 52, 56–7, 59
Juansher, Duke of Kakhetia 59
Juansher, son of St Archil 61, 64
Jughashvili *see* Stalin
Jugheli, Gen. Valik'o 344
Julian, Emperor 40
Julius Capitolinus 36
Justin II, Emperor 50–51
Justinian, Emperor 48–50
Jvari monastery 52–4

K'aeni castle 125
Kaikhosro I of Kartli 222–3
Kaikhosro I Gurieli 207, 213–14, 217
Kaikhosro II Gurieli 258, 276–7
Kaikhosro Mukhranbat'oni 197
Kajta Tsikhe 176
K'ak'a Bridge 199
K'ak'abadze, Davit 335
K'ak'abadze, P'olik'arp'e 367
K'akha K'akhaber 132–3
K'akha Torneli 135
K'akhaber of Guria 158
K'akhaber of Rach'a 107
K'akhaberisdze Nianiasi 108
Kakhetia, ~n 8, 13, 15, 25, 44–6, 51, 55–7, 59–61, 63–6, 69, 71, 74–5, 78, 80–84, 86–9, 92, 107, 118, 125, 127–8, 133–9, 141, 149, 153–6, 159–74, 176, 178, 181–94, 196–202, 208–17, 223, 225–7, 231–4, 236–9, 243–6, 248–51, 253–9, 261–3, 267–9, 271–6, 279, 285, 287–8, 292–4, 296, 305, 327, 329, 342, 345, 370–71, 373
K'akhiani, Mikheil 349
Kakutsa (Choloqashvili, Kaikhosro) 342–3, 346–7, 356
K'alandadze, Ana 375
Kalist'rat'e, Patriarch 342
Kalka river 121
K'ambechan 112, 127
Kamenev, Lev Borisovich 349
Kandahar 213, 232
K'andelak'i, Davit 357
Kankrin, Egor Frantsevich 286
Karabagh, Karabakh 120, 148–9, 151, 53, 155, 161, 168, 170–72, 187, 190, 193–4, 198, 225, 236–7, 245, 255–6, 267, 269, 381
Karachai 359–60
Karakoram 119, 126–8
Karaghak 169
Karchava, Grigol 367
Kareli 150, 314
Karim Khan 238, 244–5
Karnu Kalaki 68
Kars 70, 83, 109, 112, 114, 124, 135, 145, 147, 162, 171, 177, 179, 184, 191, 216, 260, 293, 304–5, 326, 344, 360–61, 390, 395, 399
Kartam 29
Kartli 12–13, 15, 19, 22–3, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 42–8, 50–53, 55–67, 69–74, 77–9, 81–2, 84–6, 89, 91, 105, 108, 124, 127, 130, 133–40, 148, 150, 153–4, 156, 158–62, 164–78, 180–94, 197–9, 201–2, 208–16, 218–20, 222–46, 248–59, 261, 263, 266–7, 269–72, 274, 276–7, 285, 287, 294, 301, 314, 316, 331, 340–41, 378
K'artsivadze, Shalva 346
Kartvelian 7, 11–15, 17–8, 20, 22–4, 43
Kasadan Qarchikhan 158
Kashka, Kashki, Kashog 16
K'asp'i 20, 38, 78, 140
K'asradze, Vasil 342
K'ata, daughter of Davit IV 90
Katakolon Magistros 79
K'atsia I Dadiani 230
K'atsia II Dadiani 240, 242, 252
K'atsia, brother of Ot'ia Dadiani 235
Kautsky, Karl 335
Kavad I, Shah 47–8
Kavtar Tbeli 69
Kavtaradze, Sergo 337, 355
Kaykaus I, Sultan 114
Kaykhusraw II, Sultan 125–6, 132
Kayseri 68
Kazakh, ~stan 358, 363, 365, 368, 371, 395
Kazan 275
K'edia, Sp'iridon 346–8, 359–61
Keill 288
Kelesh Bey 266
Kerch' 358
Kerensky, Aleksandr Fiodorovich 323, 330
K'ereselidze, Ivane 290
K'ereselidze, Levan 320
Ketevan, Queen St, wife of Davit I of Kakhetia, mother of Teimuraz I 184, 187–90, 192, 210
Ketevan, granddaughter of Teimuraz I 211, 214–16
Ketevan, daughter of Teimuraz II 232–3
K'etskhoveli, Lado 310
Keun, Odette 335
Kezherashvili, Krist'epore 234
KGB *see* Cheka
Khakhuli 113, 176
Khalid bin Yazid 59–60, 65
Khalil Beg 162
Khalil Paşa 192
Khandzta 64–5, 67, 118
Khani river 269
Khanjian, Aghasi 353
Khaqani 94, 103
Kharisch'irashvili, Father 284
Khar'kov 306
Kharlamov, Vasili Akimovich 323
Khasan-Bey 282
Khazar 53, 56–9, 62, 102
Kherkheulidze, Baak'a 189

Kherkheulidzes 194
Khevsur, ~eti 162, 209–10, 256, 263, 267, 270, 272–3, 279, 285, 287, 398, 322, 342
Khimshia 149
Khlat (Ahlat) 70, 99, 102, 114–15, 119–20, 124
Khoni 88, 169, 246
Khojevank 302
Khok'le 135
Khomerik'i, Noe 343–4
Khorasan 99–100, 256
Khorashan, 2nd wife of Giorgi XI 212
Khorashan, 2nd wife of Teimuraz I 189, 192, 201–2, 209
Khorian 49
Khornabuji 112, 134, 191
Khosro I Shah 48, 50
Khosro II Shah 51, 53
Khosro-Mirza *see* Rost'om of Kartli
Khosro, nephew of Giorgi X 186
Khosro, son of Davit XI 177
Khrami river 171, 177, 179, 337
Khresili 240
Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich 366–71
Khuashak Tsokali 108
Khudabanda, Shah 175–6, 178
Khuddan of Ossetia 101
Khulo 39
Khunani 98, 120, 134
Khutlu Bugha 136–8
Khuzayma ibn Khazim 57–8
Khvaramze, daughter of Giorgi III of Imeretia 197
Kiev 90–91, 100, 109, 317, 390
Kiliç Ali Paşa 177
K'irion II, Patriarch 325
Kirman 224
Kirov, Sergei Mironovich 334
K'it'ovani, Tengiz 380–84, 387, 390
Kizliar 244, 274
K'larjeti 16, 18, 22, 42, 44–5, 51, 55–69, 71, 74–7, 82, 85, 103, 111, 127, 170
K'ldek'ari 66, 70, 82, 85–6
Klukhor 359
Klych 359
Knorring, Gen. Karl Fiodorovich 258–61
K'obakhidze, Giorgi 374
Kobuleti 20, 244, 246, 357
Kobulov, Bogdan Zakharovich 367
K'och'lashvili, Nodar 366
Kochubei, Viktor Pavlovich 259
Kodori river 13, 207, 384, 391, 397–8
Kohl, Helmut 386
Kojori 104, 162, 172, 193–4, 338
K'okht'astavi 127, 153
Kokoity, Eduard 383, 393, 398
K'ola (province, Mt) 14, 66, 76, 112
Koliubakin, Mikhail Petrovich 296–8
Konstantin Nikolaevich, Grand Duke 299
K'onst'ant'ine I 146, 148, 150–53
K'onst'ant'ine II 159, 161–3
K'onst'ant'ine I of Imeretia 132, 138–9
K'onst'ant'ine I of Kakhetia 178, 184–5, 187
K'onst'ant'ine II of Kakhetia 226–7, 231–2
K'onst'ant'ine, brother of Giorgi II of Imeretia 179
K'onst'ant'ine, nephew of Giorgi II of Imeretia 174
K'onst'ant'ine, son of Davit II of Imeretia 252, 258, 263, 270
K'onst'ant'ine Mukhranbat'oni 245
Konya 125, 197
Korean 366
Korganov, Ivan 278
Koridze, Davit 375
Köse Dağ 126
Kosovo 397
K'ost'ant'i of Abkhazia, 63
K'ost'ant'i III of Abkhazia 61, 63, 67
K'ost'ant'i-K'akha 59
K'ost'ava, Merab 370, 374–5, 377, 379
Kotis, King 28, 30
Kouchner, Bernard 398
Kovalensky, Piotr Ivanovich 257, 260–61
Kraków 357
Krats'ashvili, Ivane 342
Kress von Kressenstein, Friedrich, Gen. 327–31
Krist'epore, Patriarch 341–2
Krist'epore II Amilakhori, Catholicos 201
Krusiński, Tadeusz 222
Krutzschenbach, Walter von 359
Kruzenshtern, Aleksei Fiodorovich 300
Ksani 137, 139–40, 142, 145, 149, 165, 173, 176, 188, 197, 199, 210, 225, 227, 231–3, 235, 237, 242, 245, 251
Ksefarnug 34
Ksenia, daughter of Boris Godunov 184, 186
Kuabulisdze, Niania 82
Küçük Kainarca 231, 244
Kuji, King 14, 23, 29
Kulumbegov, Torez 380, 382–3
Kumyk 172–3, 178, 182
Kupernik, Lev Abramovich 304
Kura (Mt'k'vari), river 7–8, 12–13, 16–18, 22–3, 26, 32, 35, 41, 46–7, 57, 59, 72, 74, 78, 89–90, 103, 120, 127, 133–4, 136, 147,

149, 152, 167, 169, 171, 176, 188, 191, 243, 255, 270, 273–4, 287, 289, 310, 326
Kurd, ~ish, ~istan 70, 80, 86, 110, 120, 124, 233, 241, 263, 372
Kurnatovsky, Gen. Ivan Danilovich 276
Kutaisi 9, 14, 49, 56–7, 62, 70, 73–4, 79, 81–4, 88–9, 95, 107, 109, 111, 123, 125, 129–30, 132, 139–40, 144, 146, 152, 158–61, 164, 171, 175, 177, 180, 189, 194–5, 200, 207–10, 215–20, 228, 230–31, 235, 241, 243–5, 254, 265, 267–71, 276, 283, 285, 287–9, 293–4, 297–8, 300–2, 304, 306, 308–13, 316, 324–5, 335, 337, 341, 344, 353, 360, 365, 367–8, 370, 379, 389
Kutaisov, Pavel Ivanovich 280
Kutateladze, Vakht'ang 391
Kutsna Amirejibi 153
Kvatakhevi 150
K'vinit'adze, Gen. Giorgi 336–7, 357
K'virik'e I of Kakhetia 60
K'virik'e II of Kakhetia 60
K'virik'e III of Kakhetia 60–61, 74–5, 78
K'virik'e IV of Kakhetia 86
K'virik'e of Lore 81
K'virion II, Catholicos 52–3

Laghiashvili, Ioseb 309
Lakoba, Mikhail 352
Lakoba, Nestor 337, 349–52, 380
Lakoba, Stanislav 380, 391
Lala Mustafa Paşa 175–8
Lamberti, Arcangelo 216
Lanchkhuti 285
Lang, David Marshall 375
Laradze, P'et're 268
Largvisi 145
Lars 399
Lashkarashvili, Mikheil 342
Lashkhishvili, Khosia 217
Lat'avri 64
Latin 11, 32, 44, 80, 89, 108, 115, 119, 158, 267, 308
Latvian 349
Lausanne 320
Laz, ~ica 7, 11, 14–16, 18, 28, 33, 35–6, 38–50, 53, 56–9, 61–2, 115, 133, 145, 158, 167
Lazar Parbetsi 45
Lazarev, Gen. Ivan Petrovich 258–62, 288
Leatherhead 396
Lebanidze, Murman 375
Lechkhumi 161–2, 215, 217, 219, 235, 263, 341
Leipzig 279
Lek'erts'a 240
Lemnos 330
Lenin, Vladimir Il'ich 325, 334–6, 338, 340, 349, 351
Leningori *see* Akhalgori
Leningrad *see* St Petersburg
Leo I, Emperor 43
Leo IV, Emperor 62
Leo I of Abkhazia 57, 61
Leo II of Abkhazia 58, 61–2
Leo III of Abkhazia 60–61, 63
Leon, duke of K'larjeti 51
Leonid, Patriarch 338
Leonidze, Solomon 251, 253–4, 258–9, 263, 265, 269–70
Leont'i, son of Aleksandre III of Imeretia 214
Leontiev, Russian envoy 184
Letellier, Victor 282
Leucothea 15, 28
Leuville-sur-Orge 344
Levan I of Imeretia 180
Levan I of Kakhetia 165–6, 168–9, 171–3
Levan I Dadiani 168–9, 175
Levan II Dadiani 177, 189–90, 194–5, 197–200, 295, 207–9, 213, 215
Levan III (Shamadavle) Dadiani 215, 217–18
Levan V Dadiani 266, 276–7, 282, 285, 289
Levan, brother of Giorgi XI 212, 224
Levan, grandson of Erek'le II 268
Levan, son of Erek'le II 253
Levan, son of Giorgi VII of Imeretia 229
Levan, son of Teimuraz I 190, 192
Lezgi(ans) 104, 123, 211, 219, 225–6, 231–3, 235, 237, 240–43, 251–4, 263, 267–8, 270, 273, 292
Likhi, Mt 13, 27, 35, 42, 59, 63, 84–5, 111, 124, 130, 132, 134, 151, 167, 176
Lip'arit' *see also* Baghvash
Lip'arit' I Dadiani 153, 155, 158
Lip'arit' II Dadiani 162
Lip'arit' III Dadiani 213
Lip'arit', Ivane 82
Lip'arit'iani, Giorgi *see also* Giorgi IV Dadiani 190, 195
Lisanevich, Major Dmitri Tikhonovich 269
Litvinov, Maj. Piotr Maksimovich 264, 266–8
Livonian 173
Lloyd George, David 331
Lomaia, Aleksandre 395
Lominadze, Beso 348–50
Lomisi, Mt 140, 263
Lore (province) 71, 78–9, 81, 89–90, 94, 103–4, 125, 136, 153, 159–60, 170, 177, 179, 186–7, 331–2, 336

Lortkipanidze, Grigol 337, 341
Lortkipanidze, T'it'e 335, 345
Lossow, Gen. Otto von 327–8, 331
Louis XI of France 158
Louis XIV of France 224
Louis XV of France 224–5
Louisiana 374
Luarsab I 166–71
Luarsab II 188–90, 192
Luarsab, brother of Archil of Kakhetia & Imeretia 211
Luarsab, grandson of Teimuraz I 208–9
Luchansky, Grigori Èmmanuilovich 392
Lucullus, Lucius Licinius 26
Ludendorff, Gen. Erich 327
Ludovico da Bologna 157–8
Lunacharsky, Anatoli Vasil'evich 345
Luristan 211
Luzhkov, Iuri Mikhailovich 393
Lykhny 300, 377
Lyons 310
Lymaen-tsaw, Queen of Ossetia 134

McCain, John 395, 397
Machabeli 161, 259, 381
Machabeli, Giorgi 320, 327, 330
Machabeli, Ivane 308
Machares of Pontus 26
Mach'avariani, Mukhran 377
Machiavelli, Niccolò 400
McSwiney, Terence 340
Magadan 377
Maghlak'elidze, Gen. Shalva 357, 359–60, 369
Maghnari 166
Magyar *see* Hungarian
Mahdi, Caliph Al- 58
Mahmed bin Khalid 60
Mahmet-Beg of Iran 185
Mahmud Eldigüz 102, 104
Mahmed, envoy of Uzun Hassan 158
Maia, sister of Solomon II 269, 274, 292
Maikop 359
Maisuradze, Nodar 369
Makharadze, Pilip'e 310, 316, 335, 339, 349
Makhat'adze, Nik'oloz 352
Maksime II Abashidze, Cathlicos of Imeretia 252
Malaga 299
Malakia, Archbishop 165, 174
Malakia Gurieli, also II, Catholicos of Abkhazia 194–5, 197
Malalas, John 51
Malama, Gen. Iakov Dmitrievich 312–13
Malenkov, Georgi Maksimilianovich 366–8
Malik Ahwad 115
Malik Ashraf (Damascus) 124
Malik Ashraf (Khlat) 120
Malik Shah 82–5, 94, 108
Malipiero, Pasquale 157
Mamardashvili, Merab 381
Mamia II Dadiani 153
Mamia III Dadiani 167
Mamia IV Dadiani 175, 179–80
Mamia I Gurieli 166–7
Mamia II Gurieli 187, 189, 192, 195
Mamia III Gurieli 219–21, 227, 229–30, 239–40
Mamia IV Gurieli 235, 239
Mamia V Gurieli 264, 277
Mamikonian, Prince 51
Mamikonian, Vahan 46
Mamison pass 337
Mamuk'a Mukhranbat'oni 231
Mamuk'a, son of Giorgi III of Imeretia 208
Mamuk'a, son of Giorgi VII of Imeretia 235–6, 240
Mandel'shtam, Osip Èmil'evich 335
Manglisi 58, 342
Mani(chean) 40
Mansur, Caliph Al- 58
Mansur, Sheikh 253
Mansur, son of Emir Jaffar III 79
Mantua 157
Manuchar I Dadiani 180, 189
Manuchar II Dadiani 258
Manuchehr III of Shirvan 90, 92–3, 98
Manuel I of Trebizond 135
Manuel Comnenus 102, 105, 116
Manzikert 82, 114
Mar Saba 40, 80
Marabda 193–4
Maragha 134
Marco Polo 130
Marcus Aurelius 33, 35
Marekhi of Lore 81
Marekhi, wife of Levan I of Imeretia 180
Maria of Alania *see* Marta
Mariam, wife of Solomon II 269, 274
Mariam, 1st wife of Giorgi I 75–7, 79–82
Mariam, 2nd wife of Giorgi XII 259, 261–2, 288
Mariam, aunt of Giorgi VII of Imeretia 229
Mariam Dadiani, wife of Simon I Gurieli, 2nd wife of Rost'om I & of Vakht'ang V 194, 198–9, 208, 211–12
Mariam Dadiani, 1st wife of Aleksandre V of

Imeretia 236
Mark III, Patriarch of Antioch 154
Mark Antony 29
Mark of Ephesus 155
Marr, James 288, 319
Marr, Nikolai Iakovlevich 319, 364
Marseilles 338, 361
Marta, Queen of Bagrat' III 75
Marta (Maria of Alania) 77, 81
Martini, Prof. Samuel 267
Martinus, general 49–50
Mart'qopi 134, 193, 196
Marushiani, Zviad 70, 73, 75
Marushisdze, Ioane 69, 73
Marwan ibn Mohammed (Murvan the Deaf) 57–8, 124
Marx, Karl 306, 309–10
Maslama ibn al-Malik 57
Mas'ud Temirek of Mosul 100
Mas'udi, al- 62
Matskhvarishi 107
Mateos I, Patriarch of Echmiadzin 298
Maurianos, general 55
Maurice, Emperor 51
Mauro da Verona 246
Mayafariqin 92, 99
Mazeppa 228
Mazniashvili, Gen. Giorgi 326, 338, 343, 346–7
Mdivani, Budu 340, 345, 352
Mechnikov, Evgraf Il'ich 280
Medea 14
Mede, ~an, ~s 18, 20, 25, 43
Mehmet III, Sultan 183
Mehmet Paşa Gürcü 183
Mekhlis, Lev Zakharovich 358, 364
Melkisedek I, Catholicos 74
Memna Botsosdze 123
Menagharashvili, Aleksandre 356
Menshevik 314, 316, 319, 324, 336–50, 353, 356–7, 361–2, 369
Menua, King 17
Menzhinsky, Viacheslav Rudol'fovich 344
Merabishvili, Avtandil 346
Merabishvili, Vano 393–4, 399
Merkits 151
Merkulov, Vsevolod Nikolaevich 364, 367
Mermeroes (Mihr-Mihroe) 49
Meshik, Pavel Iakovlevich 367
Meskheti *see* Samtskhe
Meskhi 12, 18, 22, 63–4, 79, 137, 139
Meskhi, Sergei 303
Mesopotamia 16, 56
Mest'ia 399
Met'ekhi 160, 310, 317, 355
Metode of Rach'a 242
Mgeladze, Ak'ak'i 365–6
Mgeltsikhe 176
Mghvime *see* Shio-Mghvime
Michael VII Doukas, Emperor 77, 81
Michael VIII Palaeologus, Emperor 132
Michael IV, Patriarch of Antioch 159
Michel, Jean-Victor 224
Midas, King 18
Mihr, patrikios 55–8
Mihran *see* Mirian III
Mihran, Persian general 46
Mihrandukht', daughter of St Archil 64
Mihrdat I of Iberia 29
Mihrdat II of Iberia 31, 35
Mihrdat III of Iberia 41
Mihrdat IV of Iberia 42
Mihrdat V of Iberia 42–3
Mihrdat, duke of Javakheti 51
Mihr-Mihroe *see* Mermeroes
Mikadze (Mikava), Ut'u 297
Mikael I, King of Imeretia 132, 139–40
Mikael, Archbishop 45
Mikel of Samtavisi 108
Mikel IV Marianisdze, Patriarch 107–10
Mikeladze, Evgeni 353, 374
Mikeladze, Giorgi 228–9
Mikeladze (Svanetia) 297
Mikhail Nikolaevich, Grand Duke 299–302, 304, 308
Mikhoels, Samoel 365
Mikoyan, Anastas 367
Milan 38
Miles, Richard 392
Miletian, Miletus 15
Milne, Gen. George 332, 334
Milošević, Slobodan 390
Miloslavskaia, Feodosia 223
Minadoi, Giovanni Tommaso 173–4
Mingrelia, ~n (Sabediano) 7, 11, 14–16, 18, 20–21, 33, 36, 42, 49–50, 62, 64, 127, 153, 158–62, 167–71, 174–5, 178–81, 189–92, 194–5, 197, 199–200, 205, 207–9, 213–20, 227–30, 234–5, 239–44, 252, 254, 258, 263, 265–6, 270–71, 277, 279, 282, 285, 289, 292–4, 296–7, 300–1, 307–8, 314, 318, 334, 345, 351–2, 355, 363–7, 371, 376, 378, 382–4, 386, 389–90, 392, 399
Minsk 395
Miran Shah 149, 152
Mirandukht' 44

Mirbach, Count Wilhelm von 327
Mirian I 25
Mirian II 25, 29
Mirian III (Mihran) 25, 29, 36–9, 41, 43
Mirian, son of Erek'le II 260
Mirianashvili, Razhden 341
Mirtskhulava, Aliosha 367–8
Mir-Wais 223
Mirz Bozorg 267
Misztódfalusi Kis, Miklós 224
Mithridates of Iberia *see* Mihrdat I, II
Mithridates of Armenia, brother of Parsman I 30–32
Mithridates, King of Pergamon 15, 28
Mithridates I of Pontus 22
Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus 25–8
Mits'ishvili, Nik'olo 348
Mittan 16
Miyaneh 115
Mkhargrdzeli, Avag 122, 125–6
Mkhargrdzeli, Ivane, Atabag 110–11, 113–14, 116–17, 120–22
Mkhargrdzeli, Ivane jr 130
Mkhargrdzeli, Sargis 101–2, 104, 110–11
Mkhargrdzeli, Shanshe 125–7
Mkhargrdzeli, Shanshe jr 137
Mkhargrdzeli, Zakaria 110–14, 116
Mkhargrdzeli, Zakaria, amirspasalari 130
Młokosewicz, Ludwik 310
Modebadze, Sara 304
Modena 156
Modimnakhe (Mtiuleti) 137
Modimnakhe (Rach'a) 241
Modist'os Abuletisdze 86
Moghis ed-Din 113, 121
Moghrisi 69
Mogilevsky, Pavel Ivanovich 269
Mogilevsky, Solomon Grigor'evich 348
Mohammed bin Atab 65
Moldavia 389
Molière, Jean-Baptiste 290
Molokane 342
Molotov, Viacheslav Mikhailovich 356, 361, 366–7, 370, 372
Mongol, ~ia, ~ian 119–46, 148–51, 154–5, 191, 195
Montauban 308
Montefiore, Sir Moses 291
Moors 163
Morénas, Joseph Elzéar 279
Morocco 163
Moscow 147–8, 173, 181–2, 186–7, 192, 207–9, 214, 217, 224, 235, 259, 273, 281, 283–4, 298, 302, 308–12, 314–15, 322, 328, 337, 340, 343–5, 348–51, 354–9, 364–7, 369–79, 381, 386, 391, 393, 395, 398
Mose, bishop of Tsurt'avi 53
Moses, Father 192
Moses Khorenatsi 31
Moskhi 12, 18, 19
Mosul 100, 165
Mouravov, Anton 243
Movakan 136
Mozdok 236
Mroveli, Leont'i 80
Mtiuleti 136–7, 140–41
Mtskheta 9, 12, 13, 18, 22–4, 26, 32, 35, 38–9, 45–7, 52, 62, 69, 74, 88, 150, 154–7, 159, 165–6, 168, 171, 184, 233, 259, 272, 288, 315
Mt'k'vari, river *see* Kura
Mudros 330
Muhammad ibn Abi'l Saj 60
Muhammad II of Chorasmia 119–20
Mukhas-dze of Tbilisi 125
Mukhrani 84, 137–8, 149, 165, 178, 190, 193, 199
Mumadid al-Daula 71
Murad III, Sultan 177–8
Murad IV, Sultan 194, 196–7
Muraviov, Gen. Nikolai Nikolaevich 292–4, 303
Murtaz Quli Khan 210, 215
Murvan *see* Marwan
Mukhuri 49
Musa Paşa 168–9
Mushegh of Kars 70
Mushki 18
Mustafa II, Sultan 228
Mustafa III, Sultan 241
Mustafa Paşa *see* Jaqeli, Manuchar II
Mzhavanadze, Vasili 367–74

Nach'armagevi 96, 111, 116, 124
Nach'rishk'revi 246
Nadaraia, Sardon 354, 368
Nader Shah 232–4, 236
Nadzaladevi 341
Nagorny Karabakh 381
Nagy, Imre 366, 368
Najm ad-Din Ilghazi 92
Nakhichevan 92, 113, 116, 119–20, 123, 134, 145, 149–50, 152, 164–6, 169, 179, 184, 233, 236
Nakhiduri 183
Nakhoragan 50

Nana, queen 39
Naples 196, 247
Napoleon I 257, 267, 279, 273
Napoleon III 297
Nasawi, an- 122
Naser al-Din, Shah 302
Nashchokin, Russian envoy 184
Nasir ad-Din Dukman 99
Nasir, Caliph al- 112
Nasri of Samtskhe 63, 66–7
Natia Amirejibi, wife of Konst'ant'ine I 153
Nauru 398
Navruz, Ilkhan 138
Nazar Ali Mirza 232
Neidgardt, Gen. Aleksandr Ivanovich 284, 286
Nero 28, 32
Nerse, son of Guaram III 58, 62
Nerses V, Patriarch 290, 292, 298
Nest'an-Darejan, daughter of Aleksandre II of Kakhetia 182
Nest'an-Darejan, wife of Giorgi VII
Nest'an-Darejan, wife of K'onst'ant'ine II 159
Nest'an-Darejan, wife of Simon I 171, 178
Nestorian 44, 122, 137
Netherlands 223, 260, 294, 361, 392
Netkachev, Gen. Iuri Maksimovich 393
Nicaea 38–9
Nicaragua 398
Nicephorus Ouranus 71
Nichabi 92, 166
Nicola di Rutigliano 265–8
Nicolas I, Tsar 278–86, 289, 291–2
Nicolas II, Tsar 307, 311–13, 315, 317–22
Nicolas, consul 325
Nicolas Mystikos 63–4
Nikiphorus III, Emperor 81
Nikiphorus Comnenus 76
Nikiphorus Phocas 76
Nik'oladze, Nik'oloz 303, 306–7, 310, 328, 335
Nikolai, Exarch 314
Nikolai Nikolaevich, Grand Duke 321, 323
Nik'oloz, Archimandrite 235
Nik'oloz, bishop of Tbilisi 158
Nik'oloz II Catholicos 136–7
Nik'oloz V Catholicos, son of Levan I of Kakhetia 173
Nik'oloz VI Amilakhori Catholicos 212
Nik'oloz Gulaberisdze, Patriarch 108
Nik'oloz 'the Great' Dadiani 282
Nik'oloz jr Dadiani 289, 297
Nikon, Exarch 314–15, 317
Nikopsia *see* Tuapse
Nik'orts'minda 74
Nilos 163
Nino, St 39–40
Nino Dadiani 265–6, 277
Ninoshvili, Evgeni 310
Nisibis 32–3, 36, 38
Nitti, Francesco 333
Nizam al-Mulk 81, 85, 94, 108
Nizam of Ganja 94
Nizharadze, Giorgi 230
Nizharadze, P'et're 360
Nizharadze, Tamar 230
Nizhni Novgorod 260
NKVD *see* Cheka
Nogai steppes 375
Nokalakevi (Archaeopolis) 14, 40, 49–50
Norman 11
Novgorod 109
Novosil'tsev, grocer 341
Nugzar of Aragvi 184
Nunua *see* Nino
Nutsubidze, Shalva 355

Obama, Barack 399
Oberländer, Theodor 359
Obolenski-Dadiani, Salomé-Mia 356
Ochamchira 15
Odessa 266, 275, 286, 300, 317
Odishelidze, Gen. Ilia 337
Odisharia, Shalva 362
Odzrkhe 16, 17, 63–4, 111
Ögedei 126
OGPU *see* Cheka
Okrop'ir, grandson of Erek'le II 281–2
Okruashvili, Irak'li 396
Ol'ga Fiodorovna, Grand Duchess 300, 304
Oljat 137
Öljeitü, Ilkhan 139
Oltisi (Oltu) 71, 75, 83, 168, 340
Omanishvili, Kaikhosro 190
Omar Khan 252–3, 258
Omar Paşa 192
Op'iza 64, 66–7
Opsite 49
Orakhelashvili, Mamia 337, 339, 344, 348–9, 350, 353
Orakhelashvili, Maria 349–50, 353
Orakhelashvili-Mikeladze, Ketevan 374
Orbelis 90
Orbeli, Lip'arit' 104
Orbeli, Ivane 101–5
Orbeli, Ivane junior 104
Orbeli, Kavtar 105
Orbeli, Sumbat' 101, 104

Orbeli, T'arsaich' 136
Orbeliani, Davit 253, 256
Orbeliani, Dimit'ri 299
Orbeliani, Dmit'ri 261, 263, 268, 276
Orbeliani, Elene 290
Orbeliani, Giorgi 299
Orbeliani, Grigol 300–1, 308
Orbeliani, Mariam 299
Orbeliani, Sulkhan *see* Sulkhan Saba
Orbeliani, Vakht'ang 272–3
Orbeliani, Varvara 292
Orbelianis 82, 153, 292
Orbeliani-Davydova, Elisabed 299
Orjonik'idze, Sergo 316, 334–6, 338–40, 342, 345, 348–50, 353, 355
Orlov, Iuri Fiodorovich 375
Orod of Parthia 30
Oroiz, King 26–7
Ortach'ala 377
Oshki 68–9, 71, 74
Ossetia, ~n, Ossetic (Alan) 8, 18, 23–5, 27, 29, 31–6, 40–44, 46, 49–50, 56, 59, 63–4, 74, 76–7, 81–2, 90–92, 94, 96, 101–2, 110, 123–4, 134, 137, 138, 140–41, 145, 209, 212, 219–20, 223, 231, 233, 241, 260, 263, 267–70, 272, 277, 279, 294, 299, 315, 317, 326–7, 334, 337, 340, 342, 359, 368–9, 372, 375, 378, 380–84, 386, 390, 393–4, 396–9
Ostia 34
Ostrogoths 36, 47, 358
Ot'ia IV Dadiani 234–5, 239–40
Otrok, Qipchaq chief 91
Ottoman 122, 150–52, 155, 157–9, 163–85, 187–94, 196–7, 199–200, 207, 209, 211–19, 222, 224, 226–8, 230–41, 243–6, 251–5, 258, 265, 271, 274, 276, 285, 289, 293, 300, 304, 307, 320–21, 323, 326–7, 330
Oxus 82, 124, 164
Ozurgeti 285, 336

P'aat'a, son of Vakht'ang VI 238
Pacorus, King 35
Padla I of Kakhetia 60
Padla II of Kakhetia 60
Pailodze, Valent'ina 373
Pakourianos *see* Bakuriani
Palavandishvili, Gogi 270
Palavandishvili, Iese 281
Palavandishvili, Nik'oloz 281
Palestin ~e, ~ian 40, 80, 86, 119, 138, 141, 144, 173
Palmyra 84
Panask'ert'i 74–5
Panask'ert'eli, Sitikhatun 156
Panask'ert'eli, Taqa 156
Panask'ert'eli, Zaza 133
Panask'ert'eli-Tsitsishvili, Zaza 161
Panin, Nikita Ivanovich 251
Pankalia 68
P'ank'isi 128, 388, 390–91
Papajanov, Mikhail Ivanovich 323
P'ap'ulia, Ch'ich'ik'o 367
P'ap'una of Rach'a 214
Paravani, Lake 65, 158
Parejan of Ossetia 134
Paris 72, 91–2, 158, 288, 293, 306, 332, 335, 344–6, 356, 362, 364, 369, 375
Parma, Epifano di 210
Parma, Rafaello di 210
Parnajom, King 25, 29
Parnaoz, son of Erek'le II 257, 260, 262–3, 267
Parnavaz I 23–5, 29, 36, 43
Parnavaz II 27, 29
Parsman I 29–32
Parsman II 'Valiant' 33–4
Parsman III 34
Parsman IV 42
Parsman V 51
Part'adze 50
Parthia, ~n 24–6, 28–36, 54
Partskhisi 78, 82, 172, 183
Paskevich, Ivan Fiodorovich 278–82
Pashtun 213
Paşinler 169
P'at'iashvili, Jumber 377–8, 390
P'at'ark'atsishvili, Badri 396
Paul I, Tsar 256–9, 272
Paul III, Pope 169
Paul of Aleppo 91
Paulucci, Marquis Filipp Osipovich 271–3, 280
Pavel, Exarch 309
Peikar Khan 191–3
Pelagius, prelate 119
Peradze, St Grigol 362
Pericles of Athens 20
Peri Jojik' 68, 71, 76
Peroz, Shah 42, 44, 46–7
Persarmenia 41–2
Persia, ~n *see also* Iran, ~ian 12, 14–15, 18–23, 27, 33–6, 38–55, 59–60, 83, 88, 91, 94–6, 101, 103–4, 107–8, 113, 117, 126, 147, 153, 158, 160, 162, 167, 170, 184, 189, 196, 209–11, 214, 216, 223–5, 233, 245, 250–51, 253, 267–8, 272–3, 276–82, 302, 323, 335

Pervane Mu'in ad-Din 132
Peter I 'the Great', Tsar 223–9, 231, 253
Peter III, Tsar 238
Peter the Iberian 39–40
Peter, St 38
Peterson, Anastasia Pavlovna 318
Peterson, Nikolai Leont'evich 318, 321
Petit, Marie 224
Petliura, Simon 346
Petra (in Lazica) 48–9
P'et're, Catholicos 45
P'et'rits'i, Ioane 88
P'et'rits'oni 88–9
Petrograd *see* St Petersburg
Pharnakes of Bosphorus 15, 26, 28
Pharnakes I of Pontus 24
Pharsala 28
Phasis *see* Poti, Rioni
Philip III (Burgundy) 157–8
Philip II (Spain) 180, 182
Philip IV (Spain) 196
Phoenician 12, 19
Phrygia, ~n 18
Picasso, Pablo 335
Pich'vnari 20
Pimen of Sinop
Piotr Nikolaevich, Grand Duke 321
P'ip'a Shalvas-dze 139
Piran Gushnasp 47
P'iraghia, P'iraghishvili 200
Pir-Budaq 153
Pirumov (Pirumian), Simon 346
Pitirim, Exarch 317
Pitsunda (Pityus, Bichvinta) 28, 36, 38, 42, 48, 92, 174, 371
Pius II, Pope 157–8
Pivov, Russian envoy 182
Pliny the Elder 14, 25
Plovdiv 88
Plutarch 20
Poland, Pole, Polish 163, 209, 220, 251, 280–82, 286 290, 292 298–9, 302, 304, 307, 310, 318, 321, 324, 334, 284, 336, 345–6, 348–9, 356–7, 398
Polemon I 28
Polemon II 28–9, 31
Polukhanov, Russian envoy 182
Pompey, Gnaeus 26–8, 288
Pontus 24–5, 28, 38, 42
Poti (Phasis) 14–15, 19, 28, 36, 40, 50. 56, 160, 170, 177, 231, 234, 243–4, 252, 259, 263, 266, 268–9, 274, 279, 283, 289, 292–3, 296, 299–300, 302, 310, 328–31, 337–8, 349, 358, 372, 384, 388
Potiomkin, Grigori Alexandrovich 250–51, 254
Potiomkin, Pavel Sergeevich 246, 250–51, 253–4
Potsdam 361
Powell, Colin 392
Poznań 370
Prague 346, 361, 378–9
Prester John 94
Prinkipo Islands 332
Procopius of Caesaria 38, 43–4, 47, 52
P'rokhore of Jerusalem 80
Prone river 161, 167, 329
Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph 309
Przhevalsky, Gen. Mikhail Alekseevich 325
Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite 39–40
Pshav, ~ia 116, 162, 209–10, 232, 237, 270, 287
Pshavela, Vazha (Razik'ashvili, Luk'a) 308, 342, 360, 373
Pskhu 359
Psou, river 61
Puryshkevich, Vladimir Mitrofanovich 318
Pushkin, Aleksandr Sergeevich 280, 286
Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich 390–94, 397, 399, 400
Puzyrevsky, Col. Ivan Onufrievich 276–7
Pythodoris, Queen 28

Qara Yusuf 152–3
Qaraghaji 141
Qara-Koyunlu 152, 156
Qaramusal, Shamkhal 166, 173
Qarqarashvili, Giorgi 381, 384, 386
Qarchikha-Khan 193
Qauchkhishvili, Mikheil 357
Qazbegi, Aleksandre 308
Qazvin 115, 134, 172–3, 175, 178, 182, 233
Qilij Arslan II, Sultan 111, 114
Qints'visi 161
Qipchaq 90–93, 96, 99, 102, 104–5, 107, 109–10, 112, 120–21, 124
Qipiani, Dimit'ri 300–1, 307–9
Qizil Arslan, Atabagh 112
Qom 209
Qorghanashvili, K'akhaber 172
Qubasari, general 104–5, 107
Qulevi 266
Qutlu Arslan 108
Qvareli 236, 273
Qvarqvare *see* Jaqeli
Qveli 61, 83

Qvirila river 266

Rach'a 74, 107–8, 127, 132, 139, 161–2, 180, 209, 211–12, 214, 218–19, 229–31, 234–6, 239–42, 252, 276, 285, 289, 304, 311, 337, 340
Radamist' 30–31
Radde, Gustav 304
Rákosi, Mátyás 366
Ramaz, son of Davit X 166
Ramishvili, Isidore 313, 317, 323, 326
Ramishvili, Noe 329, 335–6, 344–8, 356–7, 362
Ramsay Macdonald, James 335
Rapava, Akvsent'i 354–7, 360–62, 364–7, 369
Rapava, K'ap'it'on 363
Rawlinson, Col. Alfred 332
Razik'ashvili, Levan 342
Razik'ashvili, Luk'a *see* Vazha Pshavela
Razik'ashvili, Vakht'ang 360
Razmadze, Solomon 281
Read, Gen. Nikolai Andreevich 291–2
Reagan, Ronald 376–7
Redens, Stanislav Frantsevich 349–50
Redut-Kale 266, 274, 276–7, 279, 293–4
Reineggs, Jakob 246
Rev I 34–5
Rev II 40
Rezvan Paşa 179
Rhine 36
Rhodopolis *see* Vartsikhe
Ribbentrop, Joachim von 356
Rice, Condoleeza 397
Riga 229, 273
Rijeka 334
Rimnik 224
Rioni (Phasis), river 13–14, 28, 42, 74, 177, 240, 242, 244, 266, 276–7, 289, 293, 351
Ripsime, St 39
Rk'oni 150
Robakidze, Grigol 353, 361, 369
Roelofs, Sandra 392, 396
Rokh, Shah 234, 237
Rok'i tunnel 375, 397
Rokhlin, Gen. Lev Iakovlevich 389
Rok'iti 218
Roman, Rome 22, 24–34, 36, 38–43, 77, 80, 88, 103, 122, 126, 139, 155, 157–8, 163, 182, 196–7, 210–12, 335
Romania, ~n 12
Romanos III, Emperor 77
Romanos IV, Emperor 82
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano 361
Rosemorduc, Count Gentil de 294
Rost'om I (Khosro-Mirza) of Kartli 193–4, 197–201, 208–11, 213–14
Rost'om I of Imeretia 179–80, 189
Rost'om Gurieli 167–8, 170
Rost'om of Rach'a 239–42
Rost'om, brother of Vakht'ang VI 226
Rostom ('Roustam' Razmadze) 270
Rostov 345, 370
Rothschild 309
Rottiers, Col. Bernard 276
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 262, 281
Rozen, Baron Grigori Vladimirovich 280–84
Rozen, Baron Ivan Karlovich 270
Rozen, Praskovia Grigor'evna 280
Rozen-Dadiani, Lidia Grigor'evna 280, 283
Rtishchev, Gen. Nikolai Fiodorovich 271, 273–5
Ruadam, 1st wife of Giorgi VII of Imeretia 230
Ruadam, 1st wife of Vakht'ang V 211
Ruadam, daughter of Giorgi XI of Kartli 228
Rudolf II, Emperor 180
Rufinus of Aquileia 39
Ruh, Shah 153
Ruisi 79–80, 87, 93, 150, 220
Rukhadze, Nik'oloz 364–7
Rukn ad-Din, Sultan 112–16
Rusa II King 18
Rusa Amirejibi 153–4
Russia, ~n 8, 39, 53, 71, 78, 90–91, 94, 100, 102, 109–10, 121, 126, 135, 146–7, 155–6, 163, 173, 181–2, 184–7, 189, 192–3, 196, 199, 207–11, 213–20, 222–3, 225–9, 231–8, 240–47, 250–94, 296–327, 329–37, 339–42, 349–51, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361, 363–7, 369, 371–2, 376–9, 382–4, 386–99
Rustaveli, Shota 107, 117, 153, 211, 224, 330, 333, 355
Rustavi 47, 58, 73, 81, 89–90, 134, 185, 356, 371, 378
Rusticus, general 49–50
Rusudan, Queen 110, 116, 118, 121–6
Rusudan, daughter of Davit IV 91
Rusudan, daughter of Demet're I 100–1, 107, 109
Rusudan, daughter of Giorgi III 101, 105
Rusudan, 1st wife of Davit IV 91–2
Rusudan, wife of Vakht'ang VI 223
Rusudan, 1st wife of Giorgi II of Imeretia 175
Rydzewski, Ferdynand 302

Saak'adze, Avtandil 193, 197
Saak'adze, Bezhan 191
Saak'adze, Giorgi 188–9, 191–4, 196–8

Saak'adze, Ioram 193, 197
Saak'adze, Mak'rine 188, 192
Saak'adze, P'aat'a 192–3
Saak'adze, Zaal 200
Saak'ashvili, Mikheil 390, 392–400
Saba of T'beti 77
Sabediano *see* Mingrelia
Sachkhere 304
Sadeq-Andrea 256
Sadun of Ani 102
Sadun Mank'aberdeli 131, 135–6
Safar Paşa of Çıldır 194, 200
Safavid 164, 225
Safiye Sultan, mother of Mehmet III 182
Sagdukht', Queen 42–3
Saghir Maghat'lisdze 112
Saguramo 316
Sahak III, Armenian Patriarch 53
Sahil ibn Sumbat 60
Saingilo 184, 327
Saint-Cyr 361
Saint Omer 158
St Petersburg (Petrograd, Leningrad) 224, 238, 243–4, 252, 254–5, 258, 261–3, 265, 268–9, 272, 274–5, 277, 280–82, 284, 286, 289, 291, 296–9, 302, 306, 309, 311–12, 314, 317–19, 322–4, 367, 376, 391
Sajaia, Aleksi 342, 355
Sajaia, Nugzar 391
Sajid 60–61
Sakharov, Andrei Dmitrievich 375
Sakhok'ia, Tedo 353
Saladdin (Salah ad-Din) 111
Salamidze, K'ik'o 270
Saldukh, Emir 99, 101
Saldukh, Sultan Nasreddin of Kars 112
Saltuk Oglu 113
Samarkand 72, 147–50, 152, 154
Samgori 363
Samkharadze, Dr 375
Samoel, Archbishop 45–6
Samoel, Duke of Kakhetia 59
Samshvilde 81–2, 89–90, 104, 107, 125, 156, 160, 179, 238
Samsun 116
Samtavisi 88, 108, 142, 150, 154
Samt'redia 379
Samtskhe 12, 18, 63, 66, 68, 79, 83, 111, 116, 125, 127–8, 130, 133, 136–40, 143–6, 148, 150, 153–4, 156–62, 164–71, 175–9, 181, 183, 188, 194, 197, 200, 214, 217, 231, 237, 240, 243–4, 253, 351
Samurzaqano 289, 307
Samushia, Zurab 381
San Stefano 305
Santo Lazaro 307
Saracens 79, 92, 125
Sarduri II, King 17
Sargon II, King 17
Sarıkamış 321, 325
Sarishvili, Irina 386
Sarkisian, Rafael 368
Sarkozy, Nicolas 398
Sarmatia, ~n 24, 26, 30, 36
Sarp 386
Sartich'ala 176
Saru Taqi 200
Sasireti 78
Sasperi, Saspires *see* Speri
Sassanid 35–7, 41–2, 44, 50–52, 54, 69
Satinik, Pricess 32
Saulaces, King 14, 25
Saurmag I 24–5
Saurmag II 40–41
Saurmat 36
Sayat Nova 238
Schacht, Dr Hjalmar 357
Schulenburg, Graf Friedrich Werner von der 320, 327–8, 330, 340, 359
Schwartzbard, Sholom 346, 348
Scudieri, Giovanni 288, 298
Scythian 17, 18, 21, 24, 27, 36
Sebastopolis *see* Sukhumi
Sefer Bey 266, 268
Sefi, Shah 197–9
Sefi Khan 232
Seif ad-Din 149
Selenja 109
Seleucid 23–5
Selim I, Sultan 165
Selim Khan 198, 209–10
Selif Paşa 276
Seljük Turks 79–87, 89–90, 92–4, 98, 100, 102–3, 108–9, 111–13, 116, 125–6, 133, 151–2, 191, 195
Semion of Suzdal 155
Senak'i 345, 383, 398
Senekerim II Artsrun 75, 79
Seos, envoy 48
Separna 49
Sephelia 35
Serif-Beg Khimiashvili 304
Sevan, lake 149
Shadin 130
Shah-Banwar of Khlat 102
Shakespeare, William 308

Shahumian, Stepan 325
Shaki 149, 152–3, 166, 170, 176, 237
Shalik'ashvili 161, 179
Shalik'ashvili, Ambok'o 285
Shalikashvili, John 386
Shalik'ashvili, Otar 168–9
Shalik'ashvili, Varaz 179
Shalmaneser III 17
Shalva of Akhaltsikhe 114, 122–3
Shalva of Ksani 210
Shalva K'up'ri 126
Shalva Kvenipneveli 137
Shamil, Imam 257, 284, 286, 288, 290, 292–4, 299–300, 359
Shamil, Seid 359
Shamkor 74, 112–13, 124, 127, 150
Shams ad-Din Eldigüz 99, 102–4, 112, 115
Shams ad-Din of Tabriz 120
Shanidze, Ak'ak'i 351
Shanidze, Mzekala 334
Shanshe of Ksani 225, 227, 232–3, 235
Shaori 74
Shapur I 35–6, 38, 40
Shapur II 40, 42
Shapur III 42
Sharaf al-Mulk 124
Sharapas, vitaxa 32
Sharia, Dazmir 364
Sharia, P'et're 355, 362, 364, 367
Sharmaidze, Anzor 386
Shashurkin, Zakhar 354
Shat'ili 273
Shavdia, T'engiz 361
Shaverd of Karabagh 171
Shavliani, Adarnase 63
Shavliani, Ioane 63
Shavsheli 83
Shavsheti 13, 17, 65–6, 77
Shavteli, Ioane 88
Shchepkin, Mikhail Semionovich 290
Sheikh Ibrahim of Shirvan 149, 151–2
Shemakha 93, 113, 187–8, 225, 232
Shemokmedi 277
Shengelaia, Dato 381
Sheremtev, Sergei Aleksandrovich 307
Shervashidze (Chachba) 153, 181, 215, 266, 274
Shervashidze, Giorgi *see* Sefer Bey
Shervashidze, Mikhail 266, 282, 289, 298, 300
Shervashidze, Otagho 78
Shervashidze, Set'eman 194
Shevardnadze, Eduard 371–9, 381–93
Shevardnadze Nanuli 372, 385, 388
Shevardnadze, Nugzar 388
Shilda 273
Shio-Mghvime monastery 52, 86, 96, 114, 142, 345
Shirak 67, 71, 75
Shiraz 190, 196, 238, 244–5
Shirvan 83, 90, 92–4, 98, 101–3, 109, 112–13, 121–2, 125–6, 133–5, 145, 147–9, 151–3, 164, 168, 170, 176, 178, 185, 187–8, 190–91, 193, 198–9, 225, 233
Shkhepi 70, 180
Shorap'ani 27, 42–3, 48, 62, 140, 228, 231, 234, 243, 285, 292
Shore, Gen. Offley 325
Shoshit'a of Rach'a 218, 231, 234, 236
Shteiman, M. E. 336
Shuamta 166
Shurta of Kakhetia 60
Shushanik', St 46
Shuvalov, Pavel Pavlovich 314
Siberia 261, 270, 273–4, 277, 282, 285–6, 302, 305, 314–15, 317–19, 323, 350, 360, 368
Sicily 122, 196
Sighnaghi 166, 272, 288, 370
Sigua, T'engiz 382
Siid Ahmed of Shaki 149, 152
Siid Ali of Shaki 149
Simon I 171–3, 176–83, 188, 227
Simon II ('Khan') 193, 197, 200, 210
Simon I of Imeretia 220–21, 227–8
Simon, regent of Kartli 222, 224
Simon I Gurieli 194–5
Simon I Catholicos of Imeretia 214, 216
Simon de Montfort 108
Simonovich, Gen. Fiodor 269, 271, 274
Sinai, Mt 64, 73
Sinan Paşa 178, 187
Sindukht'ar Jaqeli 146
Singapore 400
Sinop 115–16, 230
Sioni 233, 258, 269, 287
Sipiagin, Gen. Nikolai Martemianovich 278
Sitikhatun, wife of Vakht'ang IV 156
Sivas 150
Sixtus V, Pope 180
Sk'anda 42, 48, 180, 210, 215, 218–19, 234
Slav, ~(on)ic 57, 62, 307
Slovakia 359
Smbat I of Armenia 61–2, 67
Smbat II of Ani 70
Smbat VIII of Armenia 67
Smbat of Lore 81
SMERSH 361–2, 365

Smith, Felix Willoughby 325
Smolensk 238
Smyrna (Izmir) 140
Sobieski, King Jan 220
Sofia, Empress of Russia 223
Sokhaista 169
Solana, Javier 398
Solghar 135
Sollogub, Count Vladimir Aleksandrovich 289, 292
Solomon I of Imeretia 214, 238–46, 249–52, 276
Solomon II of Imeretia 246, 251–2, 254–5, 257–60, 263–72, 274, 288
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr Isaevich 374
Soros, George 392
Soterichos 49
Souris *see* Vani
South Africa 399
South Ossetia 340, 368–9, 378, 380–82, 386, 390, 393–4, 396–9
Sovdagar 182
Spain, Spanish 7, 126, 152, 163, 180, 182, 196–7, 210, 288, 292–3
Speer, Albert 364
Spenser, Edmund 117
Speri 12 18–20, 96
Sphrantzes 157
Spon, Barbara 286
Stakowski, Bolesław 318
Stalin (Jughashvili), Ioseb 10, 256, 310, 313, 315–6, 319, 334–7, 339–42, 344–5, 348–55, 357–71, 373–5, 377, 379
Stalin, Vasili Iosifovich 364
Stalina, Svetlana 351, 364
Stanislavsky, Konstantin Sergeevich 353
Staroselsky, Vladimir Aleksandrovich 312–13
Stavropol 309
St'epane of T'beti 67
St'epane, archbishop 69
St'epanoz I 52
St'epanoz II 53–5
St'epanoz III 57–8, 64
Stephen of Nakhichevan 169
Sterne, Laurence 269
Stokes, Col. S. B. 334–5
Stolypin, Piotr Arkadievich 318–19, 324
Strabo 23–4, 27
Stratophilos 38
Subadai 120–21
Sudoplatov, Pavel Anatol'evich 364
Sukhorukov, Vasili Dmitrievich 281
Sukhotin, Gen. 243
Sukhumi (Dioscourias, Sebastopolis), 13–16, 19, 26–8, 33, 38, 40, 43, 48, 56, 62, 73, 140, 160, 231, 252, 266, 274, 284, 286–7, 289, 292–4, 300, 304, 310, 324, 326, 336–7, 340, 352, 358–60, 365, 367, 370, 376, 378, 383–4, 389, 391, 397
Sula K'almakheli 79
Suleiman I, Shah 211–13
Süleyman Paşa of Çıldır 253–4
Süleyman Shah of Rum *see* Rukn ad-Din
Süleyman 'the Magnificent', Sultan 167, 169
Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani 212, 224–5
Sumbat' I of K'larjeti 66–7
Sumbat' of K'larjeti 74–5
Sumbat' Davitisdze 51
Sunja 173
Supsa 388
Surami 127, 130, 143, 150, 166–7, 171, 190, 233, 252, 258, 276, 285, 291–2, 294, 302, 309, 313
Suren, marzpan 51
Susa 19
Svan, ~etia 7, 11–16, 21, 27–8, 33, 42–5, 48–50, 56, 62–3, 73, 79, 89, 159, 162, 209, 215, 230, 240, 278, 282, 289, 296–8, 303, 314–15, 333, 341, 359–60, 384, 397, 399
Svanidze, Aliosha 315, 337, 345, 355
Sveri 81
Svet'i Tskhoveli 39, 150
Svimeon, Catholicos 74
Svimon of Bedia 93
Svimon Ch'qondideli 92
Svimon of Trebizond 161
Sviri 296, 344
Sweden, Swedish 209, 224, 228–9
Swiss, Switzerland 275, 289, 302, 307, 320, 346, 361, 369, 375
Syropoulos, Sylvester 154
Syria, ~c, ~n 23–4, 40, 42, 84, 86, 121–2, 126, 138–9, 148, 158, 165, 368
Sysoev, Gen. Vasili Alekseevich 276

T'abidze, Galak't'ion 353, 374
T'abidze, T'itsian 348, 368
Tabriz 115, 120, 122–3, 129–30, 134, 137–8, 147–50, 152, 159, 164–5, 167, 177, 183–4, 223, 237, 246, 281
T'abakhmela 338
Tabuk'ashvili, Paresh 270
Tacitus 29, 31
Tagliavini, Heidi 398
Tahir of Alinjak 149
Tahmasp I, Shah 167–73, 175
Tahmasp II, Shah 226

Talleyrand, Charles Maurice de 266
Tamar, Queen 94, 100, 104–17
Tamar, daughter of Davit IV 90, 93, 96, 98, 101
Tamar, daughter of Queen Rusudan 121, 125–6, 132
Tamar, granddaughter of Erek'le II 262
Tamar, 1st wife of Giorgi XI 212
Tamar, 1st wife of Levan III Dadiani, 4th wife of Bagrat' IV of Imeretia, 2nd wife of Giorgi III Gurieli 215–18
Tamar, wife of K'onst'ant'ine II 163
Tamar, wife of Luarsab I 167–8, 170–71
Tamar Abashidze, 2nd wife of Aleksandre IV of Imeretia, then wife of 'Gochia', & of Giorgi IV Dadiani 219–20, 227–9
Tamar Amanelisdze, 1st wife of David VI 117, 132
Tamar Gurieli, 1st wife of Aleksandre III of Imeretia 194
Tamar 'Crystal-Ankles' Gurieli, 2nd wife of Giorgi VII of Imeretia 230, 236
Tamaz, uncle of Giorgi XI 212
Tamaz Quli Khan 232
Tambov 314, 318
Tamunia (Tamar), 1st wife of Levan II Dadiani 194–5
T'ao (-K'larjeti), Taochoi 13, 17–8, 20–22, 24, 47, 57–71, 74–8, 81, 83–5, 88, 90, 103, 111–12, 114, 124, 127, 133, 148, 150, 170
T'aosk'ari castle 111
Taqaishvili, St Ekvtime 337, 362
Targamadze, K'akha 391
Tarku 166, 182
Tarsus 71
T'ashir-Dzorageti *see* Lore
T'ashisk'ari 188, 219
Tatar 121, 126, 140, 155, 160, 163, 173, 176, 188, 287, 320, 345
Tatia (Tamar), 3rd wife of Bagrat' IV of Imeretia 216
Tatishchev, Russian envoy 184–6
Taurus Mts 25
T'beti 67–8, 77, 144
Tbilisi 8, 16, 42, 45–7, 51–3, 55–6, 58–61, 63, 65–6, 71–3, 77–83, 89–90, 92–3, 95, 98–102, 104, 107, 109, 111–12, 116, 119–20, 123–6, 128, 130–34, 136–41, 144–5, 147–9, 151, 153, 155–6, 158–60, 162–3, 165–8, 171–2, 176–80, 187–8, 190–91, 193–4, 196–7, 200, 209–13, 215, 219, 223–7, 232–4, 236–9, 243, 246, 250–51, 255–63, 265–75, 277–94, 296–304, 306–16, 318–19, 321, 323–35, 337–8, 340–42, 345, 348–9, 351–2, 355–9, 362, 364–5, 367, 369–90, 392–5, 398–400
Teguder 132, 134
Tehran 172, 267, 279, 362
Teimuraz I 182, 184, 187–203, 207–18
Teimuraz II of Kakhetia 225, 227, 232–4, 236, 241–2
Teimuraz Mukhranbat'oni 194
Teimuraz, nephew of Solomon I 241
Teimuraz, son of Giorgi XII 268–9
Tekla (Fekla), daughter of Erek'le II 282
Telavi 73, 78, 211, 223, 256, 272
Tenerife 299
Teodore II, Catholicos 153
Teodore, priest 188
Teodose, Archbishop 186
Teodosi II of Abkhazia 59, 65
Teodosi III of Abkhazia 61, 63–4, 70
Terek river 148, 173, 182, 207, 214–15, 272, 303
Terentius, Comes et Dux 41
Tereshkevich-Mzhavanadze, Vikt'oria 367, 372
Ter-Petrosian, Kamo 316, 335
Tetri Ts'qali (Aksu) river 98, 133, 135
Tevdore II Mirianisdze, Patriarch 110–11
Tevdore, general 89
Tevzadze, Gen. Davit 389, 391
Texel 361
Theatines 140, 198
Thebes 40
Theodor, arkhon of Lazica 56
Theodora, 2nd wife of David VI 132
Theodosius (Anchba) 53
Theodosius, Emperor 42
Theophanes III, Patriarch of Jerusalem 196
Theophanes the Miletian 27
Theophilus, Emperor 62
Thermistagoras 15
Thomas the Slav 62
Thrace, Thracian 21
Tianeti 198, 342
Tiberius, Emperor 30
Tighva 101
Tiglathpileser, King 12, 16, 17
Tigranes II, King 26
Tigranes junior 27
Tikhanovsky, Col. Iosif Andreevich 273
Tikhon, Patriarch 342
Tilsit 267–8
Timur Lang 146–55, 157, 159, 161, 163
Tinatin, 1st wife of Levan I of Kakhetia 166, 173

Tinatin, 2nd wife of Levan III Dadiani 216
Tinatin, daughter of Teimuraz I 199
Tinatin, sister of Luarsab II 188
Tiribaz, Satrap 20
Tiridat, King 30–32
Tiridat, satrap 33
Tirkashi 99, 101
Tmogvi 74, 111, 165, 175
Tobolsk 250
Togarmah 15
Tokhtamysh 146–8
Tolochanov, Nikifor 209
Tolstoi, 2nd Lt Ivan Petrovich 226, 228
Torgha castle 184, 211
Torghua of P'ank'isi 128
Tormasov, Gen. Aleksandr Petrovich 265, 268–71
T'oroshelidze, Malakia 352
Torrès, Henri 346, 348
Tortum 151
Totleben, Gen. 243
Toulouse 308
T'qibuli 74, 319
Trabzon *see* Trebizond
Trajan, Emperor 32–3
Trdat, King 42
Trdat III (Armenia) 39
Trebizond (Trabzon) 12–13, 16, 21, 24, 28, 33, 42–3, 65, 68–9, 76, 102, 105, 115–16, 133, 135, 141, 145–7, 153, 157–8, 161, 164, 174, 244, 246, 274, 276–7, 285, 320–21, 326, 386
Trialeti 16, 18, 55, 66, 70, 75, 77, 80, 85–6, 98, 227
Trieste 299, 307
Trotsky, Leon Davidovich 326, 337, 342, 349, 352–3, 368
Truso valley 140
Tsakhur 173, 231
Tsanars 59–60
Tsanava (Janjghava), Lavrent'i 355, 365, 368
Ts'ate I, King 32, 48
Ts'ate II, King 50, 53
Ts'ereteli, Ak'ak'i 290, 303, 307
Ts'ereteli, Giorgi 303
Ts'ereteli, Grigol 304
Ts'ereteli, Irak'li 317, 323, 332
Ts'eretli, Mikheil 320, 330, 336
Ts'ereteli, P'ap'una 235
Ts'ereteli, Shalva 367
Ts'ereteli, Zurab 269
Ts'eretelis 180, 276
Tsikheguji 14, 15, 48, 56, 73
Tsirek'idze 373
Tsitsianov, Gen. Pavel 261–7
Tsitsiashvili, Natan (Mosha) 304
Tsitsishvili 161, 261, 314
Tsivi, Mt 140, 144
Tskhavati 137
Tskhenists'qali river 49, 65, 207
Tskhinvali 212, 226, 314, 326, 340, 342, 378, 380, 382–3, 397
Tskhumi *see* Sukhumi
Tsot'ne Dadiani 127
Tsova-Tush *see* Batsbi
Ts'qalt'ubo 364
Ts'uketi 59
Ts'uluk'idze, P'aat'a 195
Ts'uluk'idze, Sopio 277, 282
Ts'uluk'idze, Varden 343
Ts'unda 25
Tsutskhvati 243
Tsurt'avi, Iakov, Bishop of 46
Tuapse (Nikopsia) 96, 116, 326
Tughrul of Nakhichevan 92, 99
Tukulti-Nimuri I, King 15
Tula 262
Turk, ~ey, ~ic, ~ish 7, 8, 12–13, 17–18, 33, 43, 54, 58–60, 62, 66, 68, 70, 72, 75, 79, 81, 83–4, 86, 89–90, 94–6, 102–3, 108, 114, 120–22, 124, 127, 133, 147, 150, 157–8, 168, 170–71, 174–87, 189–93, 196–9, 207–8, 211, 214–17, 219–20, 223–4, 226–8, 230–32, 234–5, 239–46, 250–55, 257–8, 263, 266–71, 274–5, 277–80, 282, 286, 291–4, 300, 302, 304–5, 319–21, 323–31, 334–40, 342, 344, 346, 352–4, 356–61, 363, 365, 369, 381–2, 386–7, 389–90, 392, 395, 399
Turkestan 294
Türkmen 113, 145, 152–3, 160–62, 164, 184, 189, 191, 209–10, 236
Türkmenchai 278
Tush, ~eti 162, 209–11, 223, 230, 233, 237, 270, 285
Tzanoi *see* Zan, Mingrelian
Tzibe, Ioannos, strategos 48

Ubykh 300
Udi 41
Ufa 332
Ugedei 124
Ugulava, Giorgi 400
Ujarma 45, 47, 51, 59–61
Ukraine, Ukrainian 228, 252, 271, 318, 334, 336, 340, 346, 350, 357, 364, 367, 372, 384, 389, 394

Ulumbia 153
Ulump'ia, daughter of Bagrat' V 146
Umar, grandson of Timur Lang 152
Ummayad 56
Undiladze 189, 196–8
Uplistsikhe 20, 61, 69–70, 78, 105, 87, 93
Urartu 11, 12, 13, 16–18
Urban VIII, Pope 196–7
Urbnisi 20, 87, 93
Urdure of Ossetia 74
Urmiye lake 187
Urnayr, King 36
Urut'adze, Grigol 341
USA *see* America
Uslar, Baron Piotr Karlovich 297, 299
Uzbek, Atabag 118–20, 122
Uzbekistan 389
Uzun Hassan 158–60, 164

Vachagan II 42
Vache, King 35
Vache II (Caucasian Albania) 41
Vachnadze, Prince Revaz 305
Vakht'ang I Gorgasali 43–7, 50–51, 75, 88
Vakht'ang II 132, 136–7
Vakht'ang III 137–9
Vakht'ang IV 153, 155–6
Vakht'ang V (Shahnavaz) Mukhranbat'oni 209–12, 214–16, 220
Vakht'ang VI 213, 222–32, 260–62, 275, 284
Vakht'ang I Gurieli 179
Vakht'ang III Gurieli 246
Vakht'ang, brother of Bagrat' III of Imeretia 170
Vakht'ang, brother of Simon I 183
Vakht'ang, son of David IV 96, 99–100
Vakht'ang, son of Davit II of Imeretia 276–7
Vakht'ang, son of Erek'le II 260, 262
Vakht'ang Mukhranbat'oni 172, 176
Vakht'ang of Rach'a 236
Vakhusht'i, nephew of Giorgi VII of Imeretia 229, 235
Vakhusht'i, son of Vakht'ang VI 57, 59
Valashk'ert'eli, Zakar 76
Valens, Emperor 41
Valerian, Emperor 36
Valle, Pietro della 196–7
Vamiq II Dadiani 161
Vamiq III Dadiani 213, 215
Van, lake 68, 114, 119, 121
Vani 14, 15, 19, 20, 24, 28, 170, 360
Vanuatu 398
Varam of Gagi 125–7
Varangians 71, 78
Varaz-Bakur I 39–41
Varaz-Bakur II 41–2
Varaz Bakur of Caucasian Albania 46
Vardan II of Armenia 46
Vardan of Svanetia 82
Vardan Amaneli
Vardan Dadiani 111
Vardanisdze 90
Vardis-tsikhe *see* Vartsikhe
Vardzia 114, 116, 154, 156, 170, 399
Varlaam, Exarch of Georgia 269, 272
Varsken, vitaxa 46
Vartsikhe 14, 15, 50, 235, 242
Vasak Bagratun 64
Vasak (rebel) 100–1
Vashiq Shaburis-dze 157
Vaspurakan 75–6
Vatican 138, 141, 145, 155, 196–7, 224, 265, 267, 357
Vaziani 345, 389
Vejini 84
Veliaminov, Gen. Aleksei Aleksandrovich 277
Velistsikhe 118
Venezuela 398
Venice, Venetians 114, 141, 156–61, 247, 307
Veshap'eli, Grigol 345–6
Vespasian, Emperor 32
Vezhan Buzmir 51
Vichy 359, 362
Vilnius 299, 317, 378
Virsheli of Ksani 140, 149–50
Vitellius, Lucius 30
Vitte, Sergei Iul'evich 311–12, 319
Vladikavkaz 302, 310, 380
Vladimir (city) 100, 109, 128, 367
Vladimir Monomakh 90–91, 100
Vladivostok 311, 355, 361
Vlasov, Gen. Andrei Andreevich 359
Vlodzimirsky, Lev Emelianovich 367
Volga 126, 186, 228, 332
Vol'khovsky, Vladimir Dmitrievich, Gen. 281
Volkonsky, Gen. Dmitri Mikhailovich 263
Vologas II (Armenia) 35
Vologda 308
Vologes II (Parthia) 31, 33–4
Voltaire 242, 262
Volynsky, Artemi 225
Voronezh 262, 286, 300
Voronov, Iuri Nikolaevich 380, 391
Vorontsov, Mikhail Semionovich 286–96, 299, 306
Vorontsov, Semion Romanovich 259

Vorontsova-Branicka, Katerzyna 286–7, 290, 296
Vorontsov-Dashkov, Ilarion Ivanovich 306, 312–15, 317–21
Vorontsova-Dashkova, Ekaterina Andreevna 314, 321
Vorontsova-Dashkova, Varvara Davydovna 318
Voroshilov, Kliment Efremovich 368
Vrangel', Gen. Piotr Nikolaevich 357
Vyatka 282, 297
Vyborg 317

Waggoner, Joe D. 374
Wallachia, ~n 224
Walter, Dr 299
Wardrop, Marjory 333
Wardrop, Oliver 333–4
Warsaw 256, 307, 309, 317, 346, 358, 362
Wells, H. G. 335
Welsh 12
Wesendonck, Otto von 358
Wilno *see* Vilnius
Woodruff, Fred 386
Württemberg 275

Xenophon 14, 16, 17, 20–21

Yagoda, Genrikh Grigor'evich 352, 354
Yahya of Antioch 68
Yakub Khan 161
Yatar, wife of Davit II of Kakhetia 223
Yedi Küle 183
Yehuda ben Yakov 130
Yeltsin, Boris Nikolaevich 379, 381–4, 390
Yezdigerd II 42
Yezdigerd III 54
Yugoslavia 334
Yusuf ibn Abi'l Saj 61
Yusuf Paşa (?Mamia) 178
Yusuf Paşa of Samtskhe 188
Yusuf Paşa of Akhaltsikhe 232, 235–6
Yusupov, Rafael 394

Zaal of Aragvi 199, 210
Zaal, son of Aleksandre I 153
Zaden 12, 18, 25
Zakaria Kvariani, Catholicos of Imeretia 208–9
Zakataly 340
Zakhariev, Pavel 207
Zaman, Mullah
Zampi, Giuseppe-Maria 194, 208, 217
Zan 14, 15, 21
Zankan Zorababeli 109
Zarzma 64, 68
Zdanevich, Ilia Mikhailovich 335
Zebede I, Catholicos 171, 174
Zebede, envoy 231
Zedavela 226
Zedazeni 74, 84, 86
Zeno, Emperor 44–5, 52
Zenon, King *see* Artashes
Zest'aponi 345, 371
Zevdginidze, Avtandil 155
Zevdginidze, Ivane 152
Zgorel'sky, Col. 276
Zhdanov, Andrei Aleksandrovich 363
Zhinvani 137
Zhloba, Dmiti Petrovich 337
Zhordania, Datik'o 362
Zhordania, Givi 362
Zhordania, Noe 310, 317, 320, 323–5, 327, 329–30, 332, 334–7, 344–5, 347, 362, 369
Zhvania, Zurab 387–8, 390, 392–4, 400
Zinov'ev, Grigori Evseevich 349
Zlatoust 280
Zober, King 29
Zoroastrian 35, 39–40, 42, 44–6, 48, 52
Zourabichvili, Salomé 393–5
Zubalishvili 285
Zubova, Elizaveta Dmitrievna 280
Zugdidi 174–5, 207, 215, 271, 282, 289, 293–4, 296, 302–3, 337, 348, 356, 383–4, 398
Zurab of Aragvi 192–3, 197–8
Zürich 306